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U.S. selecting military bases for closure
WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department announced Friday it will shut down or reduce operations at an additional 29 overseas military bases under current plans to trim the size of U.S. forces worldwide. The announcement of overseas closures in Germany, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands and Britain came as details were disclosed at the Pentagon of Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's proposal to shut down 31 major military installations in the United States and scale back or realign another 134. Friday's 15th round of overseas reductions brought to 704 the number of installations where U.S. military activity is being ended, reduced or placed on standby, a 42 per cent reduction since January, 1990, the department said. Of them, 66 are in Europe. Another 32 sites in Europe are being reduced for partial or complete return to host governments, the Pentagon said. The 29 announced Friday were 14 in Germany, four in the Netherlands, two in Britain, eight in Greece and one in Okinawa, Japan, including 2,200 military positions, 150 U.S. civilians and 650 local jobs. They included closing of major U.S. Air Force facilities at Iraklion, Greece, and of Bullis army ammunition depot near Pirmasens, Germany.

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Israeli charges Arab-American as terrorist

BEIRUT (AP) — An Arab-American was charged in a terrorism case Thursday with activities on behalf of Hamas, the main Palestinian militant group, in the aftermath of the expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon in December. An army spokeswoman said Mohammed Jaber, from Chicago, who appeared in a military court in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, was charged "with terrorism in a hostile organization and helping out services for that organization." Mr. Jaber was one of three Arab-Americans charged in January for alleged links to Hamas. Israel announced Sunday that it had detained a fourth Arab-American as a suspected Hamas activist. Officials said a 35-year-old man from a highly publicized attempt to portray himself as a Palestinian leader, Mohammed Jaber, was charged with terrorism. He was charged with helping Hamas fighters and what was called the "Hamas command" in the United States. Mr. Jaber is the only one of the four to have been charged. One of them was freed by a military court last month and military sources declined to say if charges were pending against the others.

Resolving Iranian crisis through dialogue

TEHRAN (AP) — The remains of a 1980 Iranian soldier, who had been listed as missing in action (MIA) in the Iran-Iraq war, were returned Friday to Tehran, the Iranian government said. The soldier, a 24-year-old man, was killed in 1980 during the Iran-Iraq war. His remains were found in Iraq and returned to Tehran. The Iranian government said it was pleased to receive the remains and that it would be buried in a cemetery in Tehran.

Yeltsin storms out of congress, to press for referendum

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin stormed out of congress Friday after lawmakers refused to soften a resolution limiting his authority, and aides said he would call a plebiscite to settle Russia's power dispute. One aide said the president would not try to disband the communist dominated Congress of People's Deputies, but favoured early parliamentary and presidential elections to end a political impasse paralyzing his reforms. After leaving the congress, Mr. Yeltsin huddled with regional administrators and his chief rival, Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, who later told lawmakers: "The situation is not so calm as to allow us to finish the congress today," and they voted to continue the emergency session for a fourth day Saturday. "We are on the verge of a revolution, on the verge of unpredictable events," Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai told reporters.

Developing relations with Gulf

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations has taken steps to develop relations with the Gulf states, a spokesman said. The spokesman said the United Nations was working to improve relations with the Gulf states and that it was planning to hold a conference on the Gulf states in the near future. The spokesman said the United Nations was also working to improve relations with the Gulf states and that it was planning to hold a conference on the Gulf states in the near future.

Lebanon in 1995

BEIRUT (AP) — The Lebanese government has extended an official invitation to Pope John Paul II to visit Lebanon and bless the end of the civil war. The invitation was extended by the Lebanese government and was seen as a significant step towards reconciliation. The invitation was extended by the Lebanese government and was seen as a significant step towards reconciliation.

Palestinian and Israeli killed, soldier found dead

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian was shot dead, a missing soldier was found murdered Friday along a major highway, and an Israeli woman was killed by Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, authorities said.

A hospital in Hebron in the West Bank said Mousa Al Haimoni died from a bullet wound in his stomach. The army said it was checking the report. Residents said he was shot by soldiers during stone-throwing clashes and reported three other Palestinians wounded.

Several hours earlier, the body of Simcha Lavie, 51, was found outside a Palestinian town in the Gaza Strip. Israeli security said Lavie's body was found in a mini-bus used daily to carry Palestinian workers from the Arab town of Khan Yunis to Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip.

"The murder was accomplished by blows with an axe and knife stabs to the upper portion of the Israeli woman's body," army radio said.

Unlike most Jews in Gaza, she had lived for many years among Palestinians in the area and moved to one of the fortified Jewish settlements only three years ago, Israelis and Arabs said.

The missing-and-found soldier, Yehoshua Friedberg, was shot several times, police said. It was unclear whether the 24-year-old immigrant from Montreal, Canada, was killed or committed suicide.

But a police announcement said just after sundown — the start of the Jewish Sabbath that investigators concluded Friedberg was murdered. Israel Television quoted police as saying an

Arab headress was found near the body.

The woman slain in Gaza was the third Israeli victim in Gaza in 10 days. Her body was found at about 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) in her vehicle parked near the town of Khan Yunis in the southern end of the strip.

The Hebrew daily Maariv recently wrote a story about Ms. Levy, saying that she had lived among Palestinians in the Gaza town of Rafah for years, but moved to a hut on one of the strip's Jewish settlements during the uprising against Israeli occupation.

Settlers in Gaza's Gush Katif area responded to the slaying by announcing they would no longer employ Palestinian labourers anymore. Hundreds of Palestinians work in Gush Katif, a cluster of 16 settlements, doing mainly menial agricultural jobs.

The dead soldier, Friedberg, immigrated in 1991 and served with the Golani infantry brigade. His parents were told he was missing Thursday night, the army said.

Friedberg failed to report back to military duty on Sunday. Hundreds of police and volunteers spent Thursday and Friday combing the rocky hillsides outside Jerusalem.

They found Friedberg's body in a ditch Friday morning along the main Jerusalem Tel Aviv highway, about 12 kilometres from Jerusalem.

Police said there were "signs of a struggle, bloodied hands," and three or four bullet wounds, including one in the chest. But no bullet casings or gun were found.

Friedberg's possessions were also found near the body, officials said.

In Beit Hanoun in Gaza, 24-

year-old Nidal Hussein Nasser died Friday when a bomb he was making exploded, Arab reporters said. The army said it was checking the report.

The killing of Ms. Cavis was claimed by the Red Eagles movement, a faction of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Violence fuels debate

The increased violence came as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was in the United States to discuss plans to restart Middle East peace talks, which deadlocked after Israel expelled some 400 Palestinian activists in December.

Police said they would try to check the violence inside Israel by increasing patrols and put up more roadblocks to check Palestinians entering Israel, Israeli radios said. They also urged Israelis to carry personal weapons, Israel Television reported.

The increased attacks prompted calls for many Israelis for more measures against Palestinians. A poll published by Maariv said 76 per cent objected to permitting Palestinians to continue working in Israel.

Right-wingers blamed Israel's suggestions it would trade land for peace at the Middle East peace talks for the deterioration.

Liberal Israelis also expressed alarm.

"We are watching a daily deterioration in the personal safety of every Israeli," columnist Yoel Marcus wrote in the liberal Haaretz daily.

"Isn't it ironic how a modern nation armed with the newest planes, missiles and nuclear power, finds itself threatened by primitive weapons?" he added.

Arab coordination talks set for March 28 Kaddoumi arrives in Amman, pays tribute to Jordan

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab parties to peace talks with Israel will meet at ministerial level in Damascus on March 28 and 29 to discuss the stalled Middle East peace process, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber said Friday.

Dr. Abu Jaber said Jordan's response to the recently issued American-Russian invitation to the next round of peace talks in Washington in April would be announced after the Damascus meeting.

Dr. Abu Jaber said he received

the invitation to attend the Damascus talks from his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Sharaa, who called him over the phone last night.

"We will be going to the meeting," he said.

In addition to the Jordanian and Syrian foreign ministers, the two-day meeting will also be attended by the foreign minister of Lebanon and the head of the political department of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Farouk Kaddoumi, as well as the foreign minister of Egypt.

The central theme of the meet-

ing is expected to be how to relaunch the peace process, in limbo since the Dec. 17 Israeli expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon.

The Palestinians have said that they would stay away from the peace talks until Israel allows the return of the expelled, now stranded between Israeli and Lebanese army lines.

Mr. Kaddoumi, who arrived here Friday after talks in Damascus, told reporters in the Syrian capital that "if Washington and Israel fail to respond to Palestinian demands, the bilateral and multilateral meetings will be sus-

pended."

Jordan has been non-committal on its attendance at the peace talks and Syria and Lebanon have not commented on the issue.

"We have to consult with Arab partners," on the invitation, which sets the ninth round of bilateral talks to begin in Washington on April 20, Dr. Abu Jaber told the Jordan Times Friday. "Hopefully we will come up with a solution" to the hurdles in the talks, he added in a reference to the expellee crisis.

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Palestinians see American pressure for talks

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Palestinian rejection of the joint U.S. and Russian invitation to the ninth round of Middle East peace talks is the clearest signal that the Palestinian leadership is firm about boycotting the next round unless some of their demands, which came in six points discussed with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Jerusalem, are met.

The Palestinians had apparently hoped for more time before the invitations were delivered to resolve some

issues they view as obstacles to achieving any progress in their bilateral negotiations with Israel.

Palestinian officials, who described the issuance of the invitations to the talks in Washington in April 20 as premature, said Washington was apparently trying to pressure the Palestinians into attending the negotiations without receiving substantive Israeli concessions on its Dec. 17 expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians.

"Issuing the invitations at this time, accompanied by Christopher's statements about being encouraged by the Sy-

rians to resume the talks, is obviously to pressure us into attending the talks without receiving our minimal demands," a Palestinian official told the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.

By ignoring Palestinian demands and issuing the invitations at this time, Palestinian insiders speculate that the U.S. was reacting to a "strongly worded" letter it recently received from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) over U.S. diplomatic contacts with the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, at a time when the U.S. refused to resume its suspended dialogue

with the PLO.

Palestinian analysts, however, said that the invitations had to be issued before Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's visit to Washington, which started Thursday, so as not to "appear as if the date was set by Israel and the U.S."

Palestinian insiders also criticised what they saw as a hasty rejection of the invitation, a decision said to have been taken unilaterally by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat without consulting neither his advisors nor his peace delegates. Palestinian delegates in

(Continued on page 5)

Exiles rejected reported PLO plan

MAR AL ZOHOOR (Agencies)

— Palestinians expelled by Israel rejected Friday a reported plan for their phased return home, insisting all must go back at once.

"The proposed phased return is absolutely rejected by (expellees) especially as we have vowed to God that we will return collectively," Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the 396 exiles said at their camp in South Lebanon.

A Palestinian official said in Damascus Thursday the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) suggested to Egypt and Syria the exiles should return home to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip by June.

Syria and Egypt worked on new ideas in Cairo Thursday to solve the crisis over the Dec. 17 expulsions and resume Middle East peace talks on April 20 stalled by the expulsions.

The United States and Russia have invited Arabs and Israelis to resume the peace talks but Palestinians refuse to go until Israel pledges not to expel any more people from the occupied territories.

Dr. Rantisi, a 45-year-old paediatrician and founding member of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, said it was impossible Arab states would attend the peace talks before the exiles return home.

"We tell... Arab brothers: Our stand is firm and will not change and we are confident they will stand by us, support our steadfastness and back our position until we return," he said.

The men took advantage of a warm and sunny day at their tent camp on a barren hillside to

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FBI traces funds it says could have financed New York blast

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Tens of thousands of dollars that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) says financed the World Trade Centre bombing was wired to the two main suspects from Germany, a federal investigator said Friday.

The investigator, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press that bank records in New Jersey showed transfers from Germany to an account held jointly by suspects Mohammed Salameh and Nidal Ayyad.

"We speculate that the money was used for the bombing, possible escape, safe houses and other terrorist activities," said the investigator. "Our main thrust is where the money came from."

Mr. Ayyad was denied bail Friday after a judge agreed with prosecutors that he posed a

"threat" to society.

The Westdeutsche Genossenschaftsbank in Dueseldorf confirmed Friday that on Feb. 17 it transferred \$2,420.07 to a New Jersey bank account jointly held by the two suspects.

Thomas Rindsfuesser, a spokesman for the German federal criminal police in Wiesbaden, said U.S. authorities had sent a request for assistance to the justice ministry in Bonn.

The New York Times and New York Newsday, citing unidentified sources, reported Friday that \$8,000 wired to the account of the two suspects has been traced to Germany.

The Record, a New Jersey newspaper, further reported that documents show that two days after the money transfer from the German bank, the New Jersey bank logged a \$2,020 cheque that

was written on the account. The documents also show a \$400 withdrawal from a cash machine in Jersey City the same day, the newspaper said.

Defence attorney Thomas Higgins argued at a bail hearing Friday the evidence against Mr. Ayyad was weak and asked for bail as high as \$300,000, saying Mr. Ayyad's relatives could pledge property to secure that amount.

"What the government has proved in this complaint is that Mr. Salameh and Mr. Ayyad knew each other," Mr. Higgins said. "That's about all."

But U.S. Magistrate Dennis Cavanaugh ordered Mr. Ayyad, 25, held without bail.

Mr. Higgins said Mr. Ayyad would remain in the Union County jail in New Jersey, pending an

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Relatives describe Nidal Ayyad as unlikely bomber

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nidal Ayyad, the second suspect charged last week with helping the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York, comes from a background highly unlikely to see him involved in extremist activities, according to his relatives in Amman.

Although a devout Muslim, Mr. Ayyad, a Kuwait-born Palestinian who acquired American nationality in 1991, was "not an Islamist fundamentalist or extremist," said his maternal grandfather, Abdul Aziz Ayyad.

"Nidal is definitely the victim of someone's plot," he added.

Sheikh Ayyad and other members of the family confirmed Nidal knew Mohammed Salameh, another Jordanian of Palestinian origin who is also charged in the

bombing case, and that the parents of Mr. Salameh had visited the Ayyads in Amman to inquire about their son.

The parents, friends and relatives of Mr. Salameh also maintain that he was also an unlikely candidate to become an extremist, turning away from his obsession with making a decent living to support his family.

Nidal, 25, is the eldest of six children — four boys and two girls, born to Abdul Rahim Youssef Ayyad and Fatima Abdul Ayyad in Kuwait in July 1967.

The Ayyads, originally from the West Bank village of Silwad near Ramallah, were settled in Kuwait until the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis forced them out along with the bulk of the Jordanian and Palestinian communities in the emirate.



Nidal Ayyad

Nidal's father, Abdul Rahim, left Kuwait for the U.S. to set up a business there in 1978. Shortly after his arrival in the U.S., he married an Italian-American and acquired American citizenship. The couple have two daughters.

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Over 6,000 returnees report torture in Kuwait

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Over 6,000 Jordanians and Palestinians who returned to Jordan from Kuwait and other Gulf countries in the post-war period have reported that they were physically harmed, mostly by means of torture, by their Gulf country hosts.

A Department of Statistics survey conducted among over 70,000 returnees in 24,635 households found that in 24,635 households reported an incident of torture or violation of "honour."

Of the households surveyed 6,023 reported that one member of their family has been tortured,

while 114 households reported that the honour of one of their family members had been violated. The survey did not specify other forms of physical harm, but 94 households reported other types of "harm" had been done to their members.

The survey scanned returnees who arrived in Jordan between Aug. 10, 1991 and Dec. 31, 1992.

Yahya Oteibi, head of the Cooperative Society for Gulf War Returnees, said that those who remained in Kuwait after the war were at greater risk of being "hurt" than the majority of the returnees who came to Jordan before the outbreak of the war in January 1991.

"The negative vibrations

against Jordanians and Palestinians were much more obvious after the liberation of Kuwait," Mr. Oteibi told the Jordan Times.

The survey found that 88.59 per cent of returnees came from Kuwait with the rest from other Arab Gulf countries.

Fifty seven per cent of the returnees have settled in Amman, 25 per cent in Zarqa, 12 per cent in Irbid and two per cent in Balqa Governorate while another two per cent settled in the West Bank, the survey found.

An estimated 38 per cent of returnees are under the age of 15 and a big majority of them born in Kuwait.

returnees in need say that it is difficult to assess the long-term effects of the torture some of them underwent.

Most torture victims, says Dr. Ghazi Abdullah who heads a clinic at the Cooperative Society for the Gulf War Returnees, would like to put their suffering behind them. A good number of the torture victims were burnt with cigarettes, and received blows to their heads and other sensitive parts of their bodies as well as cuts and bruises.

Many, Dr. Ghazi told the Jordan Times, suffer from various nervous disorders which can be traced to imprisonment. Others

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Egypt's mosque assault — second time around

ASWAN, Egypt (R) — Egyptian police have twice stormed the Al Rahman Mosque in seven years. The first time, they seized Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the spiritual mentor of Egypt's militants and in the second, they rounded up his men.

Security officials said the sweep against militants of Gama'a Al Islamiya (Islamic Group) inside Al Rahman Mosque in this southern tourist town was deliberately ferocious to kill any chance for the militants to rise up again. "The police have carried out a cleansing operation. This was a lesson for the militants not to do anything in the future. They have been taught a lesson," Aswan's Director of Tourism Mahmoud Fahmy told Reuters.

Nine militants were killed and 41 were wounded when police forces burst into the militant-controlled Al Rahman Mosque where up to 200 men, women and children were praying Tuesday night.

Islamic Group militants, led by Sheikh Abdul Rahman, a blind preacher in exile in the United States, are fighting to turn Egypt into a purist Islamic state and have devastated its tourist industry with attacks on foreigners.

Security sources and lawyers said security forces had surrounded Al Rahman Mosque first in 1986. They stormed it and arrested Sheikh Abdul Rahman with 23 of his followers. The preacher was freed five days later and was flown to Cairo for interrogation.

In 1981 the sheikh was tried but acquitted on charges of sanctifying the assassination of President Anwar Sadat. He has been living in the United States since 1990.

Two of his alleged followers have been arrested in connection with the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York last month in which five people were killed and more than 1,000 were wounded.

Security officials said militant activity grew over the past two years in Aswan, which is the major tourist centre in Egypt's southernmost province.

Followers from nearby towns and villages would flock to Al Rahman Mosque every week to take part in meetings and seminars debating Islamic laws and edicts, they said.

Residents said militant ideas were spreading fast among youngsters who were being told by fundamentalist clerics that foreign tourists "were infidels" and that working in the industry was "a sin" because foreigners were corrupt.

The sources said the number of militants in Aswan and nearby villages was up to 1,000.

A lawyer acting for some of the 87 militants arrested after surviving Tuesday's mosque assault accused the security forces of deliberately trying to kill as many as possible of the 200 worshippers packed into the building.

"Considering that Aswan is an important resort that attracts big numbers of tourists, the government wanted to show an iron fist. It decided to abort these groups which it felt were starting to cause danger..."

"It decided to hit them in their cradle before they could be able to carry out any acts of aggression. It suddenly felt that they have become a danger," he added.

"The security forces entered the mosque to physically eliminate as many people as possible. It was not to arrest them because the security bodies know exactly where they live and have definite information about their movements," Hassan Mohammad Hassan said.

"If they had wanted to arrest them, they could have done it without a single drop of blood," he said. "But the aim was to terrorise all those who believe in their ideas."

After the assault, many militants shaved their beards and replaced their white robes with trousers and shirts to avoid being detained by police, residents said.

Cairo violence

In Cairo, security forces have promised a war to the death against militants.

Police, who also shot dead the wife and child of one suspect in Cairo, lost one officer and four troopers killed. The total death toll of 23 was the highest in a single series of clashes since political violence surged in Egypt a year ago.

"The death of some of our men will not divert us from attacking the extremists until they are totally eradicated and stability returns to our country," a senior security officer told Reuters at the funeral of the dead police in Cairo.

Interior Minister Abdul Halim Moussa led an emotional procession of hundreds of relatives and colleagues of the dead through the centre of the capital after the government's most senior Muslim scholar prayed over the coffins in a mosque.

A traffic policeman was killed Thursday when gunmen suspected of being Muslim militants attacked a checkpoint near Tima, 365 kilometres south of Cairo, security sources said.

They said four or five gunmen opened fire with automatic weapons on a checkpoint on the main road through the Nile Valley and the 45-year-old policeman died immediately.



A Somali child looks at an American Marine patrolling a Mogadishu shantytown (AFP photo)

Somali warlords prepare for reconciliation meeting

MOGADISHU (R) — Somalia's warring factions Wednesday fine-tuned proposals they plan to present at a landmark national reconciliation conference next week.

The U.S.-led multinational task force said it was maintaining a high state of readiness ahead of the March 15 U.N.-sponsored talks in Ethiopia in any case any group tried to cause trouble aimed at disrupting the conference.

Farouk Mawlawi, U.N. spokesman in Somalia, told Reuters all the warlords heading the country's 16 factions had been invited and agreed to attend.

"As of today all of them have agreed to go to Addis Ababa for the talks," he said.

In Mogadishu, the main warlords, Mohammad Farah Aided and his rival, self-styled President Ali Mahdi Mohammad, met with their aides in separate meetings to formulate their proposals for the conference.

"We are busy working and re-working our proposals for the meeting," Mr. Aided aide Issa

Mohammad Said told Reuters. U.N. officials said that in the north of Mogadishu, Mr. Ali Mahdi was chairing a cabinet meeting called to work out a final document for his movement.

Gen. Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi halted a two-year blood feud in December under intense U.N. and U.S. pressure after U.S.-led military forces landed in Somalia to protect food aid for the starving.

Gen. Aided is going to Addis Ababa Sunday with special demands that he and his allies receive special status at the reconciliation conference to reflect their role in toppling dictator Mohammad Siad Barre.

Mr. Ali Mahdi on the other hand, has accepted U.N. proposals that the talks also group religious leaders and elders in an attempt to set up a broad base for discussion as possible.

Somalia collapsed into civil war after Mr. Siad Barre's downfall in 1991 and Mr. Ali Mahdi and Gen. Aided both feel they have a legitimate claim to be the next head of state.

The U.S.-led forces said they were on the lookout for trouble ahead of the meeting.

"We are not on alert but I can tell you we are in a high state of readiness. It's too quiet and we're getting suspicious just in case someone out there tries to cause trouble in order to disrupt the conference," Fred Peck, U.S. military spokesman in Somalia, told reporters.

Colonel Peck said the U.S.-led forces, due to hand over command to a new United Nations force, hoped the conference would produce concrete results on issues such as disarmament and the setting up of political structures in the country.

As many as 28,000 of the 36,000 troops in Operation Restore Hope, launched on Dec. 9, were Americans.

But the new force, made up of contingents from 20 countries, will be more diverse. U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali has set May 1 as the date for the transfer of command to the new 28,000-strong multinational force.

Peres voices concern over German far-right

BONN (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Thursday he was concerned at rising support for the far-right in Germany but he believed Germans had stood the test of democracy.

Mr. Peres, summing up a two-day visit, said he found that German leaders were also worried about the gains of the anti-foreigner Republicans in a state election last weekend and a recent wave of racist violence.

"But when we see the results of elections, we must also take a good look at the reaction of the German people," he told a news conference.

The Republicans, led by a former soldier in Hitler's Waffen-SS, won up to 15 per cent in some areas a Hesse state in the first barometer of voter sympathies since more than 2,280 right-wing attacks killed 17 people last year.

Mr. Peres said repeated rallies against racism last year by hundreds of thousands of Germans had helped reassure Israel that the majority did not agree with the far-right.

"Needless to say we don't share the German's pessimism about Germany. We don't accept the fashionable feeling in Germany that you have to start everyday with a mood of 'bonjour tristesse' (sadness)," he said.

Mr. Peres, accompanied by a business delegation, signed a bilateral agreement with Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel Tuesday pledging closer economic and technological ties.

They agreed to set up a joint council for cooperation in environmental technology and to double funds for a scientific research and development foundation to 300 million marks (\$180 million), to be split between the two states.

Discussing the environmental accord, he said: "We are struggling against the desertification of the Middle East. We have an increase in population and a decline in the fertility of the land."

Mr. Kinkel has said Germany would try harder to increase and improve Israel's trade agreements with the European Community.

Mr. Peres said Israel wanted to see a renegotiation of a 1975 economic cooperation agreement to give it a better chance to compete on European markets.

Israel purchased \$9 billion of EC goods annually but only \$4.5 billion worth of Israeli exports went to Europe, Mr. Peres said. Equally Israel bought \$2.25 billion of goods from Germany but sold only around \$1.25 billion.

Environment Minister Klaus Töpel will visit Israel on March 16 to 19 for talks with Israeli government leaders and scientists about projects to protect the environment, his ministry said in a statement.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Morocco denies mistreatment of prisoners

RABAT (R) — The Justice Ministry Thursday denied local press reports that prisoners in Moroccan jails were mistreated or had died as a result of bad conditions. In a statement carried by the official news agency MAP, the ministry said there was no discrimination between prisoners, except that adults and children, men and women, were detained separately. Relatives of political prisoners told a news conference last month that 21 prisoners had died in 1991-92 as a result of the conditions of detention. "Apart from rare cases of suicide, all other cases were due to natural causes, which were the subject of medical inquiries to establish the cause of death and type of treatment," the ministry statement said. In an apparent reference to political prisoners, the ministry said prisoners who have demanded special treatment, the ministry said, "cannot grant privileges or facilities to certain detainees without it." It said doctors and dentists, prison regulations forbid favouritism. It said doctors and dentists had been recruited to treat inmates and the seriously ill were taken to outside hospitals. It added that all prisoners were allowed to pursue studies and in the last five years 5,855 persons won diplomas while in custody.

Australian troops kill Somali bandit

MOGADISHU (R) — An Australian patrol shot dead a Somali bandit near the southern town of Baidoa Thursday, the U.S. military said Friday. The six bandits had opened fire on the patrol, part of the multinational force sent to Somalia last year to stop bandits looting relief food for the hungry. "The patrol returned fire, killing one Somali. The remaining bandits fled into the bush and the Australians are continuing to seek them," a U.S. military report said. The death was the only casualty in a series of minor incidents of shooting between the foreign troops and Somali gunmen over the past two days.

Syria to pay April salaries early

DAMASCUS (R) — Finance Minister Khaled Mahayni said Thursday that he asked all finance departments to pay the April salaries for government employees from March 20, about 10 days early, for the feast of Eid Al Fitr. Salaries in Syria are paid at the beginning of each month.

Children make toy 'bomb' in Cairo

CAIRO (R) — Two children endeared themselves to the U.S. embassy in Cairo earlier this week by making a toy "bomb" at an apartment block where American families live, a diplomat said Thursday. He said the doorman found the device, made of two mineral water bottles and some noise-making fireworks, and showed it to a U.S. resident, who took it to the embassy for checks. A security officer established it was just a toy. Foreigners living in Cairo are on the alert because Muslim militants fighting to turn Egypt into a purist Islamic state have been attacking tourists and have threatened that their next target might be foreign businesses.

German policeman shoots dead Turkish Imam

HAMBURG, Germany (R) — An Imam attached to Turkey's consulate here was shot dead by a German plainclothes policeman after pointing a gun at him, police said Thursday. Turkey's ambassador in Bonn, Onur Oeymen, said he was waiting for investigations to finish and that he had complete confidence in the German authorities. He described the 41-year-old man as a diplomat and said he had the right to carry a weapon for self-defence. Police said the Turk was bending over a German man dying from a shot wound when the plain clothes policeman, who had been alerted by the sound of shots, shouted at him. The diplomat raised a gun and aimed at the policeman, they said. The policeman then shot him dead. No details about the dead German were released. A police spokeswoman said no other weapons had been found, adding that it was still not clear what had happened.

Bangladesh offers to export manpower to Kuwait

DHAKA (AP) — Bangladesh Thursday offered to recruit more manpower to rebuild war battered Kuwait. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia told a special envoy of Kuwait's Emir, Dr. Ahmad Abdullah Al Rabeil, Kuwait's education minister, brought a message from Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah thanking Bangladesh for its support to his emirate during the Gulf war. Bangladesh had sent more than 2,000 troops to the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq during the Gulf war. Nearly 70,000 Bangladeshi workers who were forced to return home from the oil-rich country during the war have been reemployed.

Iran may be greater U.S. enemy than Iraq

By Alan Elsner

WASHINGTON — Iran may turn out to be a greater threat to U.S. interests in the long term than its neighbour Iraq, some officials and analysts believe.

While Iraq is subject to tight international sanctions, constant surveillance and intrusive inspections, Iran has been quietly rearming and is pursuing an active nuclear weapons programme, U.S. officials say.

It has also emerged as the key force opposing Arab-Israeli peace efforts, while bankrolling some of the most dangerous factions in the Middle East.

A State Department last week branded Iran the world's "most dangerous state sponsor of terrorism" and accused the Iranian intelligence service of involvement in assassinations and

bombings in the Middle East, Europe and Latin America in the past year.

"Iraq is more a problem of one person — Saddam Hussein," said one State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Iran is a problem because of the ideology of an entire regime. Therefore one could argue that in the long term Iran will be more of a problem than Iraq," he said.

When Terry Anderson, the last American hostage held in Beirut by Iranian-backed guerrillas, was released at the end of 1991, it looked as if relations between Tehran and Washington might improve.

But, neither side made a move towards the other and relations today are, if anything, characterised by even greater mutual hostility and suspicion.

Moderate Iranians advo-

cating warmer relations with the West may have been weakened when Tehran did not receive the kind of recognition they expected for its release of hostages and its strict neutrality during the Gulf war.

"There are Iranians who say they made serious concessions and did not get anything in return," said Shireen Hunter, an analyst with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think-tank.

For other, more radical elements, anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism remain the sacred legacy of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Shocked by Iraq's success in building a nuclear weapons programme that came close to producing a bomb, the United States has invested considerable diplomatic efforts to stall what it believes

is a similar Iranian effort.

"We believe they are working on a nuclear weapons programme which is at a very early stage and we believe we have had some success in restraining and retarding their programme," said the State Department official.

But it has proved impossible to prevent Iran acquiring some conventional weapons that Washington would rather Tehran did not have.

Russia sold Iran three Kilo class submarines last year, of which one has been delivered so far. It is stationed near the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil waterway.

"About the only thing they could do with that kind of submarine is sink regional merchant shipping. We don't like that," said the official.

On the political front, Iran has waged an offensive against the Arab-Israeli

peace process since the Madrid conference of October 1991 that has emerged as a major irritant to Washington.

Even while the Madrid conference was in session, Iran organised a rival conference of "rejectionists." Its chief Middle East surrogate has been Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon and Hamas activists in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Backed by tens of millions of dollars of Iranian money, the groups have emerged as serious threats to the peace talks.

Israel's decision to expel 415 suspected Hamas activists to South Lebanon last December has produced a three-month interruption in negotiations. Even if they resume next month, Hamas has proved it is a factor to be reckoned with.

Zambia breaks links with Iran, Iraq

LUSAKA, Zambia (AP) — Zambia has severed diplomatic relations with Iran and Iraq, claiming agents from those countries assisted in an opposition plot to topple the government.

Foreign Affairs Minister Veron Mwaanga told parliament he summoned the ambassadors from Iran and Iraq to his office earlier and told them they were being expelled.

Mr. Mwaanga said diplomatic ties had been broken because "as a sovereign state we cannot and will not tolerate outside interference in our internal affairs."

Last Thursday, President Frederick Chiluba declared a state of emergency in Zambia and said relations with Iran and Iraq would be reviewed.

Government officials have since said agents from those

countries were behind a plot codenamed Operation Zero Option by the opposition United National Independence Party (UNIP) to overthrow the government.

The aim was to make Zambia ungovernable through strikes, riots and lawlessness.

Under the emergency, police detained without charge 26 UNIP members, including two of former President Kenneth Kaunda's sons for alleged involvement in the plot.

UNIP denied the charges. Zambia's foreign minister made his announcement in the 150-member parliament during a debate on whether to extend the state of emergency a further three months.

Mr. Chiluba, a trade union leader, came to power in a 1991 election that restored democracy to the impoverished southern African nation.

The emergency has worried Western donors and been criticised by human rights organisations.

Mr. Kaunda ruled under a state of emergency from independence in 1964 until he was ousted in 1991. He used sweeping powers of arrest without trial to crush political opponents.

Iran expresses regret

Iraq expressed regret over the Zambian decision to expel its diplomats, the Iraqi News Agency reported.

A Foreign Ministry statement denied involvement in Zambia's internal affairs and said the government's action "exposed political purposes."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:30 Les Aventures de L'Espèce
19:00 Envoyé Spécial
19:15 News in French
19:30 Fenêtre sur
19:45 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30
America's Funniest Home Videos
21:00 Perspectives
21:30 Science Workshop
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film: "Night of the Hunter"

PRAYER TIMES

04:29 Fajr
05:46 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:45 Asr
15:08 Maghreb
19:42 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622566

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Assyrian International Church Tel. 622208

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 624932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675991

Min./Max. temp. 2/20

Agaba 1/13

Jordan Valley 6/19

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10, Agaba 18, Humidity readings: Amman 76 per cent, Agaba 55 per cent.

Weather

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cold and partly cloudy, and winds will be westerly light to moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikh 752405
Dr. Adnan Al Zughoul 898140
Dr. Wael Khurabed 615648
Dr. Fakhri Bilboul 663412
Fires pharmacy 661912
Pardows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 670035
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

WEATHER

Min./Max. temp. 2/20

Agaba 1/13

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EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 661714
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 845845
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikh 752405

Dr. Adnan Al Zughoul 898140

Dr. Wael Khurabed 615648

Dr. Fakhri Bilboul 663412

Fires pharmacy 661912

Pardows pharmacy 778336

Al Asma pharmacy 670035

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shamsani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

Jordan Television

Radio Jordan 773111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Oceana Air Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381322
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 6425816
Aidh Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 6641714
Shamsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 6672279
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66612757
Irbid, Al-Madineh 8641646
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7710173
Army, Marj 89161175
Quezon Alia Hospital 60224050

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381322

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 6425816

Aidh Maternity, J. Amn. 642412

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mallat, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shamsani 6641714



His Majesty King Hussein joined worshippers in attending Friday prayers at King Abdullah Mosque in Amman. The King and worshippers listened to the sermon delivered by Ministry of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs Secretary General Ahmad Helayyel. Also attending Friday prayers were members of the Royal Family, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, Private Chamberlain Prince Ali Ben Nayef, a number of cabinet ministers and senior military and civil officials (Petra photo).

New book outlines make-up of both houses of Parliament

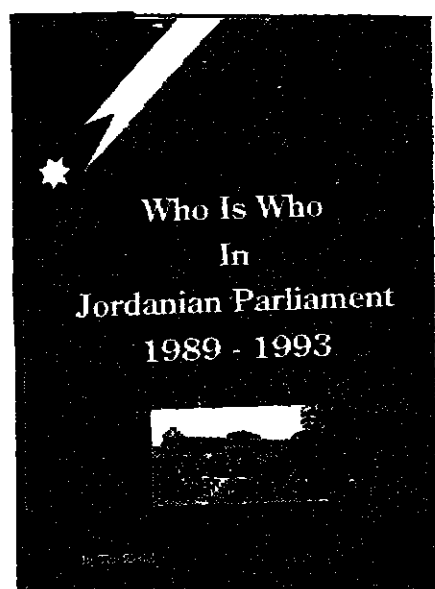
By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As far as personality profiles go, "Who is Who in Jordanian Parliament 1989-1993," a recently released booklet, is a commendable effort since it is the first of its kind published in English.

The 150-page paperback provides a brief outline of the background of the members of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament based on information provided by the parliamentarians themselves, reference books and data collected by its author Tim Riedel, a student of political science.

Presented in a blue cover with a superimposition of the Jordanian flag, the book is a useful reference for many who would like to get a first look at the composition of the Jordanian Parliament.

The publication, financed by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, an institution affiliated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany, provides basic information on each of the 80 elected members of the Lower House and 40 appointed members of the Upper House.



Included are details such as date and place of birth, religion, ethnic origin, constituency, educational background, profession, foreign language proficiency (if any), family status, membership in parliamentary committees and political orientation (wherever identified) of the 120 parliamentarians alongside their photographs.

Conspicuous by its absence though is the voting record of the parliamentarians on issues indicative of their political and social outlooks and approach to financial issues.

The bibliography of the book lists as references personal interviews, data provided by the House of Parliament, Adnan Bayoun's "Who is Who" (1985), Samer Hijazi's "Encyclopedia on Jordanian Personalities" (1992), and Hani Kheir's "An Illustrated Historical Survey" (1990), as well as various issues of the Jordan Times.

Edited and published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and printed in Jordan, the booklet is released at a time when international attention on Jordan is on the rise, if only because of the fast pace that the

democratisation has picked up, and could go a considerable way in familiarising first-comers with the political colour and structure of the Kingdom's parliament.

Probably because English is a foreign language for its author, shortcomings are also evident in terms of linguistics and structure, something that could be rectified if there was to be a reprint of the booklet.

A brief note introduces the author, Mr. Riedel, as born in Munich in 1969. A student of political science and law at the Free University in Berlin, Mr. Riedel has worked with Friedrich Ebert Foundation as part of his studies. He is said to be specialising on the systems of internal politics, studying the political party and system and procedures of decision-making in Jordan.

Who is Who in Jordanian Parliament 1989-1993, Riedel, Tim, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, pp150, Garabi Printing Press, Amman, 1993 (price not mentioned).

Sales tax to affect previously tax-free items

AMMAN (I.T.) — A special committee in charge of drawing up lists of items subject to the newly-introduced sales tax will hold a meeting today (Saturday) to discuss lists of taxable items, a report in Thursday's issue of the Arabic daily Al Rai said.

The report quoted officials as saying that the first list of items subject to the sales tax includes 113 items, and other lists are being reconsidered.

Of the first 113 items, 17 will be subject to tax for the first time. These include tourist transport services; car rental services; advertisements; audits; consultancy, engineering and legal consultation services; express mail services; security and protection services; translation services; beauty salons, hairdresser and barber services; wedding; hall rentals and video rentals.

U.N. official apologises for comment 'unwittingly' offending Palestinians

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior U.N. official has apologised to Palestinian colleagues over comments seen as insulting Yasser Arafat during a routine meeting in Amman, but the issue does not seem to have been settled despite U.N. assertions that the matter was closed.

Angela Williams, director of relief and social services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), sent the "apology" to the area staff union of the agency in Amman after a formal complaint was sent to the UNRWA headquarters in Vienna.

The comments which triggered the controversy were made by Mrs. Williams on the appearance of a fully-bearded cafeteria worker who served tea at an internal UNRWA meeting in Amman on Feb. 25.

The appearance of cafeteria workers "should not be disgusting with his beard as Yasser Arafat," Mrs. Williams said, according to the formal complaint, a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times.

pants in the meeting, were very astonished to observe this aggressive and impolite behaviour from a director of relief and social services working for and with the Palestinian people," said the complaint, signed by Aziz Daoud, Mahmoud Saleh and Jehad Taber, three senior UNRWA officials in Amman.

"We felt that this was a big intended insult addressed to all Palestinian people in general and to us as participants in the meeting in particular," it said. "Please note that such behaviour has been considered by us as an unjustified insult addressed to all Palestinians represented worldwide by President Arafat."

The complaint, dated Feb. 28, 1993, sought to bring the issue to the attention of the commission-general of the U.N. agency, which offers services to Palestine refugees, "for his kind discretion."

Emilio Prych, chief public information officer of UNRWA in Vienna, said Mrs. Williams had apologised for her comments.

"There was a complaint by some members of the staff," Mr. Prych told the Jordan Times over the phone. "Mrs. Williams has

apologised in a letter (that) at the meeting she made a mistake. "Our view is that the apology has removed the misunderstanding," he added, without elaboration.

According to UNRWA sources in Amman, Mrs. Williams' letter expressed "regret" over her comments, which were "not intended at insulting anyone."

Mrs. Williams said she was "saddened and shocked" that she had "unwittingly offended" the "sensitive feelings and perceptions" of those present during the meeting.

She said she had made the comments in the context of discussing the "image" and "visual perceptions" of UNRWA.

"I offer you my sincerest apologies," the source quoted the letter as saying.

Asked whether the agency considered the issue as closed, Mr. Prych said from Vienna: "Yes."

But UNRWA staff members in Amman said they had neither accepted nor rejected the apology. "It is a matter to be decided by the staff union," said Mr. Daoud, one of the signatories to the complaint.

Angela Williams, who has an excellent record of devotion to her work," he told the Jordan Times. "What matters to us is that such offending comments came from a person who occupies a very senior position in the agency."

Mr. Daoud declined further comment saying he was "bound by any decision that the staff union would adopt."

UNRWA insiders said that while the performance record of Mrs. Williams, a British national who has been with the agency for over 20 years, had no blemish whatsoever, many agency officials were offended in the past by her "patronising approach."

"Her behaviour is very condescending," said an UNRWA employee, who declined to be identified. "In her dealings with her Middle Eastern colleagues, she appears to be always indirectly reminding us — Palestinians and others — that we should be thankful that the Europeans, particularly the British, were the donors and we the recipients of help."

No comment was available from Mrs. Williams on this contention.

Minister, media chief attend film production meeting in France

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif Friday left for Paris to take part in a symposium on production of cinema, radio, and television programmes in the Arab World.

The symposium, to start in the French capital today (Saturday), will also review prospects of cooperation between Europe and the Arab World in producing

programmes and films.

Taking part in the symposium will be several Arab information ministers and senior French journalists.

Director of the Jordanian Company for Radio, Television and Cinema Production Jawad Maraga also left for Paris Friday to take part in the symposium, organised by the Paris-based Arab World Institute for Cinema, Radio and T.V. production.

The symposium will discuss three major topics: policies on audio-visual programmes in the Arab World, Arab audio-visual programmes in the West and prospects of cooperation between the Arab World and Europe, particularly France.

JD20m slated for new Irbid water line projects

AMMAN (Petra) — The Irbid Water Management Department has floated three tenders worth JD 20 million to finance water projects in the governorate, according to department Director Ali Al Qudah.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Qudah said the new projects will improve, modernise and expand existing water networks and avoid water waste.

He said the Irbid water project accounts for JD 9.9 million, and will serve about 185,000 people living in the town.

Under the project, to be carried out by a local company, the old water network will be replaced, new lines installed and homes connected to the new network.

The project aims to improve

the water situation in the town, provide a 24-hour potable water supply to residents.

The second project will be carried out in Ramtha at a cost of JD 3.7 million, according to Mr. Qudah.

Under the project, new water pipelines will be installed and all homes will be linked to the new network.

It will serve more than 40,000 people, and also benefit 20,000 towns and villages of Amrawa, Shajara, Dneibah and Turrab.

northern Jordan Valley area and Ajloun district.

Un Qasme Springs water project, costing JD 1.7 million, will benefit residents in Rajeb and the neighbouring villages.

Mr. Qudah said galvanised polyethylene pipes will be used in all the projects because of their durability.

Commenting on citizens' complaints that water bills are exaggerated and that figures appearing on the bills are not realistic, Mr. Qudah said the Water Authority has recently conducted maintenance work on the water lines and replaced part of the old network, which will result in minimum water waste and less complaints about bills.

He admitted to metre-reading errors on the part of the Water Authority staff.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince prays in Naour

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan attended Friday prayers at Naour Grand Mosque. The Prince and worshippers listened to the sermon which focussed on the lessons learnt from the Badr Battle. Attending the prayer also were deputies from Naour and several senior military and civil officials.

Sharif Zeid calls for drought study in badia

AMMAN (I.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker is expected to pass a decision authorising a subsidy and assistance to livestock breeders in the Badia region based on a study of the impact of drought in that area. A drought committee will meet Saturday to study the subject and propose practical solutions, in line with the Prime Minister's instructions.

British envoy arrives in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — Assistant Under-Secretary of the British Foreign Office for Middle Eastern Affairs Michael Burton arrived in Amman Friday on a three-day visit to Jordan during which he will meet with senior officials for talks on the latest developments in the Middle East peace talks and Jordanian-British relations. The British officials were received at the airport by Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Hussein Hamami and the British ambassador to Jordan.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled "The Present Islamic World in Photos and News" at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS, TEL.: 69401 FAX: 69238 AMMAN - JORDAN

Official to participate in U.S. educational reform programme

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Ministry of Education Planning, Development and Research Department Mohammad Ayasrah left for Washington Thursday to represent Jordan in a month-long American programme on education innovations and reform, organised by the United States Information Agency (USIA).

In a departure statement, Dr. Ayasrah said the programme will enable participants to obtain first-hand information on innovations in the U.S. educational system, which have been achieved through the employment of modern technologies and concept.

He added that the programme includes field visits to various sites, and meetings with school principals, teachers, students and parents.

Participants will also meet with federal education officials, participate in a seminar Boston on the training of secondary school teachers, and the role of universities and other educational institutions in this process. They will also have the chance to acquire information on issues related to human resources training, including in-service training of teachers, methods of evaluation and the effect ethnic diversity might have on the educational process in the classroom.

Taking part in the programme are representatives of 13 countries, including Jordan.

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KL545	1745	1740	non stop
KL540	1740	2145	via ECA
KL545	1745	2235	non stop
KL540	2230	0145	non stop

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Jordan Times

An Independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1972.

الصحف الأردنية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Britain's opening more

BRITAIN'S DECISION to resume ministerial-level contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation could be a harbinger of more positive developments on the road to full integration of the PLO into the peace process. The British move follows on the heels of the Belgian decision to upgrade the diplomatic status of the PLO office in Brussels into a fully-recognised diplomatic mission. There is little doubt that the British and Belgian moves have the blessing of the rest of the European Community nations and enjoys the tacit approval of Washington as well. This Western "rehabilitation" of the PLO must also be seen in the wider context of the ongoing peace negotiations between Israel and the various Arab parties and the simmering conflict between the mainstream PLO and the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. While Fateh and Hamas are not exactly at loggerheads over the Palestinian-expellees crisis, they seem too diametrically opposed to each other on the viability of the entire peace process in the Middle East. The Western capitals' collective recognition of the PLO as a full partner in the quest for peace in the area is a vote of confidence in the Palestinian factions that made a clear commitment in favour of the peace option. Washington will certainly follow the European initiative by extending its support more openly to the forces of peace. This the U.S. can do by resuming its interrupted dialogue with the PLO in the near future. More important and relevant than this belated Western tilt towards the PLO is the Israeli final posture on the subject. Notwithstanding Israeli officials' professed anxiety over the moves by London and Brussels to bestow recognition on the PLO as an integral element in the peace equation, there are sound reasons to believe that this protestation may not be Israel's bottom line on the issue. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has effectively set the stage for an early Israeli decision to accept dealing with the Palestinian leadership when he engineered the repeal of a 1986 law that forbade contact with the PLO. The Israeli Labour-led government must recognise that shunning the PLO for much longer would only make open the field wider for Palestinian rejectionist of the peace talks. The faster the decision to accepting the PLO as the Palestinian "government" that is totally and unequivocally committed to the cause of peace the sooner real progress in the peace process will be achieved. Pretending otherwise would be playing into the hands of the elements that are waging war against peace in the area on both sides of the divide.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RAY Arabic daily said the continuation of the sanctions on Iraq is not caused by its violations of any U.N. Security Council Resolutions, but by Western countries' envy of Iraq's swiftness and ability to reconstruct what was destroyed by the allied forces during the Gulf war. Dimitri Pericos, head of the nuclear team of experts inspecting Iraq's nuclear capabilities, was quoted in Al Ray's editorial as saying that Iraq's reconstruction capabilities show the need for having nuclear inspection teams in Iraq on the long run. "Thus, it is clearly demonstrated that the continuation of the siege and the inspection campaigns in Iraq are not prompted by violations it is committing or weapons it is concealing, but is rather due to its ability to reconstruct quickly, as if it was supposed to stand unable to repair war damages and to beg for others' help to build its infrastructure once again," newspaper said.

It described Mr. Pericos' mentality in dealing with Iraq as racial, saying he wants Iraq to be a backward country. This kind of mentality seeks to achieve that objective in daylight through the siege, inspection campaigns and threats, it added. Had the Arabs thought of this well, the paper said, they would have realised that this aggressive mentality targets them all, and that the enemies of progress do not want for any Arab to build his homeland through science and serious work. These enemies, the paper added, want the Arabs to be greedy consumers who eat and wear what they import from others. The paper continued that the enemies of progress are practicing their tyranny on Iraq while the Arabs are watching as if they are not being stabbed with the same dagger. It is time for the Arabs to rise up and reach out to each other to protect themselves from the enemies of progress so as to be able to reconstruct the Arab order and make of themselves a technological, economic and scientific power, the paper concluded.

Al Dostour Arabic daily said in an editorial that the Arab parties to the Middle East peace talks have shown some degree of unity by postponing a decision on participating in the ninth round of the peace talks till after the Arab parties meet. The Arab decision was satisfactorily harmonious despite the rejection by the Palestinian side to accept the invitation sent by the co-sponsors of the peace talks, the U.S. and Russia, the paper said. Al Dostour said postponing decision on the issue has prevented the occurrence of a significant collapse in the fragile ground on which the Arab parties to the negotiations are standing and prevented a political crack which was a covert target of Israel since the start of the peace process in Madrid in October 1991. The newspaper expressed hope that the Arabs will utilise all their power and good relations with the co-sponsors of the peace talks then practice the necessary pressures to remove the obstacle impeding the resumption of the peace talks, represented Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians from the occupied territories last December. Consequently, the newspaper concluded, the 40-day period separating the Arabs from scheduled date for the talks constitutes a practical test for the proficiency of Arab diplomacy and its ability to improve the terms of negotiations.

By Steve Holland
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The United States may be taking a more aggressive stance against Serb advances in Bosnia but remains cool to the kind of military intervention U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has in mind.

For the past year, through the end of the Bush administration and the start of the Clinton presidency, U.S. officials and commentators of all sides have warned that a "quagmire" like the Vietnam war may lie in store if U.S. troops are ordered into action in Bosnia.

Defence Secretary Les Aspin says this fear permeates not just the Pentagon but exists "throughout the U.S. government, throughout the population of the United States."

Dr. Boutros Ghali thus touched a nerve when he said U.N. member states, including the United States, must be ready to send troops against Bosnian Serb forces if they refuse to cede territory that they would have to give up under an international peace plan now being negotiated.

While Mr. Aspin did not rule out U.S. participation in such a force, White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos indicated the United States wants a more traditional peacekeeping role.

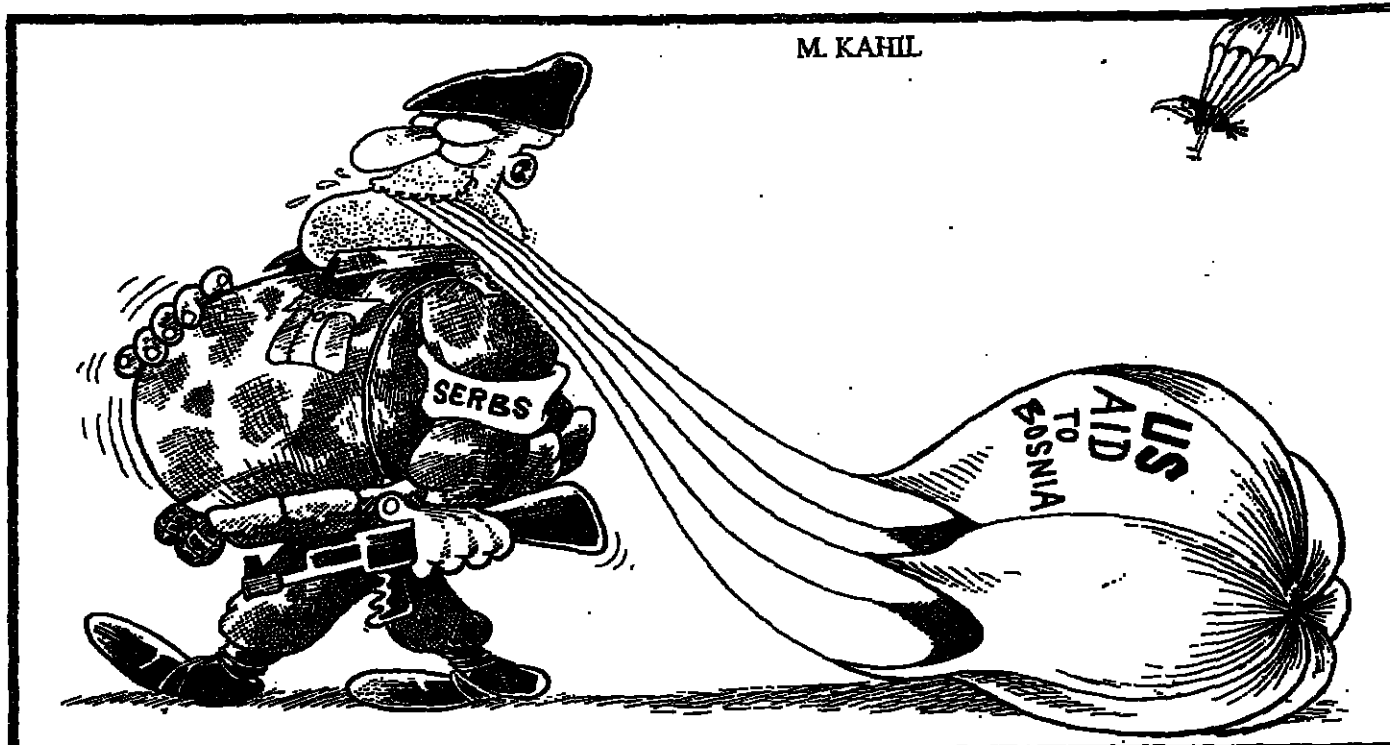
"We've had no discussions at all of anything beyond what we've said in the past, which is

that we would contemplate the use of U.S. forces to enforce an agreement that is already made," Mr. Stephanopoulos said. "We are not going to get involved. We've had no discussions on using U.S. troops in any kind of peacekeeping mission."

To coincide with its mercy mission of parachuting food and medicine to all sides in Bosnia — but mainly to Muslims

A cool reception

U.S. unwelcoming to Boutros- Ghali plea on troops in Bosnia



trapped in Serb sieges — the United States has been looking for ways to increase pressure on the Serbs to comply with U.N. sanctions. It particularly favours blocking arms shipments into and out of Serbia.

Mr. Stephanopoulos said U.S. teams in recent days had productive discussions with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Croatia, Albania and Macedonia,

and they agreed to join in pressing for better controls" over arms shipments and more stringent implementation of financial sanctions.

But sanctions have not stopped the Serb drive so far. During his presidency, George Bush tried sanctions against Iraq and ultimately resorted to military force.

The conventional wisdom has been that the mountainous ter-

rain in the former Yugoslavia and the complicated ethnic hatreds there would make a U.S. military mission too risky.

But not everyone adheres to that view.

Military expert J.P. Mackley, writing in the Washington Post concluded that "by almost any American standard, the Serbs aren't very good militarily" and were using tactics similar to those

of the U.S. civil war. Furthermore, he wrote, "if the United States did not choose to send in ground troops, U.S. fighter pilots could still clear the air over Bosnia in less time than it took in Iraq and with far less trouble."

Military writer George Wilson wrote that the high-tech Tomahawk missile would be ideal in striking Serbian targets and could do so without risking the lives of bomber pilots.

"The hilly terrain of the former Yugoslavia provides easily recognisable checkpoints for the Tomahawk," he wrote.

But experts note that a formal decision to target Serbia militarily would probably end Russia's promised cooperation in the Bosnian airlift because of its traditional ties to the Serbs and the right-wing challenge facing Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Charles William Maynes, editor of Foreign Policy magazine, writes in the current issue that the best course for the international community is a final effort to reach an agreement by negotiation.

If that fails, the United Nations should lift the arms embargo and allow the Bosnian Muslims and Croats to defend themselves against the Serbs.

"With outside help and even air support, they still would be unlikely to win the war but they might limit the size of a new greater Serbia enough to carve out a place for the Muslim minority to retain their own state," Mr. Maynes wrote.

Russian democracy

A crisis with frightening potential



Boris Yeltsin

living standards were down 50 per cent.

There has been an alarming increase in crime and corruption.

Separatist tendencies and nationalist conflicts that had been cooled by the Cold War are getting hot again, ranging from

But foreign and domestic policy are like Siamese twins — one cannot survive without the other.

If Boris Yeltsin's democratic government collapses and is replaced by an aggressive, hardline nationalist government, this will have a far greater impact on the U.S. economy than all the Clinton domestic programmes. The peace dividend will be down the tubes. The military budget will have to be increased by billions, not cut. The president's plan to reduce the deficit would have to be withdrawn.

The Russian democracy is undergoing a deadly crisis. The negative factors are frightening. Russia has 31 republics and provinces that have declared their sovereignty, and 132 nationalities.

Before the peaceful revolution of December 1991, the Russian people had never known political or economic freedom. What works in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary will not work in Russia.

Russia is going through an economic downturn worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s in the United States.

In 1992, inflation was 25 per cent a month, the gross national product was down 20 per cent and

bloody war in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia to confrontation over minority rights in the Baltics.

But despite these overwhelming odds, the conventional wisdom of most of the American media that the Russian democracy is doomed is off the mark. There is still strong support for reform among political leaders and the Russian people. The real political battle today is not between reformers and reactionaries, but between different kinds of reforms.

There are those like Mr. Yeltsin who prefer to act swiftly and decisively, and those like the Civic Union which would rather move more gradually. The fact that all political leaders except for the extreme reactionaries pay at least lip service to a free market economy means there will be no turning back to communism.

The negative news from Russia has completely obscured the positive news. Just as Washington is not America, Moscow is not Russia.

While political infighting is big news in Moscow, privatisation and growth are proceeding irreversibly in other parts of Russia.

Twenty per cent of the GNP is

now produced by private enterprise. More than 30 per cent of Russian workers are in private enterprise. The press is free. Privatising the economy has helped to eliminate shortages.

No one now talks about the possibility of starvation, as was the case when I was in Moscow last summer.

Most important, as experts such as James Billington and Gerald Corrigan have noted, the caricature that Russian workers are not responding to economic incentives is false.

In a meeting in St. Petersburg recently, private entrepreneurs unanimously agreed that, when given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a free society, Russian workers are among the best in the world.

They are also among the best educated: Ninety per cent have graduated from high school, a higher percentage than in the United States.

Can Boris Yeltsin survive? Some Western leaders I talked to question it. Some of his opponents in Russia doubt it. Most shocking, the State Department officer who until last month was in charge of aid to Russia publicly predicted he would not last. With friends like that, Mr. Yeltsin needs no enemies.

The former U.S. president, who recently visited Moscow, contributed this comment to The New York Times. It is reprinted here from The International Herald Tribune.

New world order

'How much courage is needed to be a coward?'

By William Pfaff

PARIS — The new world order has arrived. It is well and truly new, consecrating invasion, aggression and ethnic purge as acceptable international conduct (acceptable since in fact accepted by the democracies, ratified in the Vance-Owen plan for Yugoslav settlement).

The principal agency of international action, the United Nations Security Council, pursues peace in Yugoslavia by demanding that the victim of aggression, the non-ethnic Bosnian government, halt its resistance to what is being done to its people.

"How much courage is needed to be a coward?" the undersecretary of the British Foreign Office, Sir Alexander Cadogan, wrote in his diary in September 1938, when Britain and France served their ultimatum on Czechoslovakia's president, Eduard Benes, demanding that he yield to Hitler's demands.

They at least had a rationale. The appeasers had a case to make, which Western leaders do not today have. The French and British governments in 1938 believed the Czech arrogance had invited difficulties with Germany. They believed that Hitler's claims on the German-populated Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia had some justification. They saw Hitler as an aggressive nationalist, but certainly not as a figure of megalomaniac and genocidal ambition.

They believed their own countries were weaker than a rearming Germany. People then were close to World War I. The British

ambassador to Germany, Sir Neville Henderson, sent a memo to the Foreign Office in May 1938: "Surely our right course is to be prepared to submit, provided we secure peace in the West, without too great discomfort to the surge and swell of restless pan-Germanism in Central and Eastern Europe... What other practical course is open to us if we are to avoid the insane fatalistic folly of setting our course for another war?"

The West then believed that Hitler's ambitions wholly in the East. Mr. Henderson's memo went on to say that "a certain German predominance eastward is inevitable, and peace in the West must not be sacrificed to a theoretically laudable but practically mistaken idealism in the East... The German is certainly more civilized than the Slav... One might even go so far as to endeavour to prevent Germany from completing her unity or from being prepared for war against the Slav, provided her preparations are such as to reassure the British Empire, that they are not simultaneously designed against it."

This was a "realistic" position which history has shown to have been mistaken and immoral. But it was not irrational. The appeasers had a case.

Do they have a case today? Serbia is not Nazi Germany. It is a minor power with a divided public opinion and a total regular armed force of 135,000, 39,000 of whom are conscripts. Switzerland can mobilise five times that number of soldiers. The Serbian mili-

tias in Bosnia are well-armed and fanatical but undisciplined and unprofessional.

Serbia is not making a diplomatic demand that the international community award it Serbian-occupied parts of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as Hitler was doing with respect to the Sudetenland. It has invaded those countries and seized those territories (and more), brutally expelling or murdering the inhabitants, holding these regions today by means of proxy "autonomous republics." Its demand is that the world accept what it has done. In the Vance-Owen plan, the world does — with a legalistic demur or two.

As in 1938, there is a real risk that the present war will spread, but the way this is likely to come is as a consequence of Serbian victory and subsequent efforts to purge Serbia itself of its Albanian and Hungarian minorities. Indifference to aggression invites new aggressions.

The threat to the West is not that it might be drawn into an ill-prepared war with a great power, but that by tolerating and rewarding aggression, much of southeastern Europe will be drawn into disorder and war, with demoralising and divisive effect upon the democracies — and a potentially most dangerous influence inside the ex-Soviet Union.

The sole case for appeasement today, so far as I understand the situation, is that Western leaders fear the political consequences in their own countries of military involvement in Yugoslavia. The West did nothing effective a year and a half ago, however, when

economic and political measures might have halted the crisis, and now West European and other U.N. forces have become deeply and dangerously involved on the ground in Yugoslavia precisely because of their governments' evasion of their international responsibilities.

There has until now been some question as to the attitude that would be taken by the Clinton administration. The past few days have removed that doubt, confirming that the policy of Mr. Clinton will also be that of ostentatious measures of humanitarian assistance — impartially distributed between Serb aggressors and besieged Bosnians — with support for the Vance-Owen plan.

The air drops made by the U.S. Air Force these last few days have cruelly demonstrated the limit to what the United States is prepared to do: night air drops from 10,000 feet (3,000 meters) in mountainous country — with the particularly nice touch of including pork meals for starving Muslims.

This is fundamentally faithful to the established Western policy in dealing with this crisis, which is to appease, simultaneously, Western public opinion and aggression itself. It is an implausible programme, but one that thus far has been a success. The final step, already announced, will be the injection of U.S. troops to enforce the Vance-Owen plan, once that is signed. And who will have any reason to resist? Only the victims.

International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

Effort not in vain

To the Editor:

AS PART of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee's (AAC) Amman Regional office's efforts to get the U.S. government to pressure Israel to abide by U.N. Resolution 799 and Geneva Conventions, several thousand postcards were sent to American officials by Arabs, Arab-Americans and American citizens.

It was our hope that these postcards would help mobilise American officials and public to finally stand up and speak out against the illegal acts of Israel.

Many sceptics feel that our committee's activities are useless. I feel that it is important that such individuals learn that our activities are not in vain and that we must keep trying by any means possible to bring a just solution to the Arab-Israeli problem.

I would like to share with these sceptics a letter I received from a brave American citizen who knows that when there is a will there is a way, and who thinks that every human being who truly believes in a principle must bare the burden of fighting for the preservation of that principle. The letter reads as follows:

"What a pleasant surprise to get a letter from you and to find that you are doing well and very active in the struggle for peace and justice in 'your' Middle East!"

"I am ahead of you... I have been knocking myself out speaking and writing about the horrible conditions in the Arab World, you in this fight. I have been in contact with Congress people about this and I will have to say that it is an up hill battle. The powerful Israeli lobby has most congresspersons completely gone into their states and caused defeat for some. However, we must continue to 'educate' them about Israeli crimes... which we will do. It is hard to beat the millions of dollars that the lobby has given to congresspersons and I certainly want that stopped!"

"You know that I, personally, am totally pro-Arab and I guarantee my continued fight."

"I will, indeed send those very poignant cards to one and all but 'Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired and President of the Association of National Security Alumni I hope that some of the recipients actually read them!'" (Colonel, Phil Roettinger)

Dr. Aida Dabbas
Amman.

Arab coordination talks on March 28

(Continued from page 1)

Syria, which had been lukewarm to the idea of Damascus hosting an Arab meeting on the expulsions, appeared to shift its stand when it said in late January that it would convene an Arab coordination meeting on how to relaunch the peace process.

The announcement, which followed a meeting in Geneva between Mr. Sharaa and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, said the objective of the Arab talks was to enable all Arab parties to resume the peace talks "in a comfortable and agreeable atmosphere."

Mr. Kaddoumi arrived here from Damascus Friday after talks with Mr. Sharaa on the peace process and Syrian-Palestinian political relations.

Dr. Abu Jaber said he was scheduled to meet with the PLO official Saturday. Discussions with centre on the peace process and other issues that are directly related to Jordanian-Palestinian coordination.

In public comments, PLO officials are insisting on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls on Israel to allow the return of the expelled. But they are also involved in behind-the-scenes efforts to get Israel to agree to an American-brokered six-point proposal which envisages a phased return of the exiles (see separate story).

Jordan has said that while it remains fully committed to the peace process, it would be difficult for it to attend the peace talks if the Palestinians stayed away.

In a recent interview with American television, His Majesty King Hussein noted that it was under a Jordanian umbrella that the Palestinians were participating in the peace talks and as such

there was little sense in "half a delegation."

The Jordanian approach to the expelled crisis is from the vantage point that Israeli expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories is part of the broader conflict.

"The entire Palestinian nation is in exile," said a senior official. "We cannot lose sight of the reality that the peace process aims at resolving the root conflict."

In comments carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Kaddoumi said Jordan's position vis-a-vis the peace process reflected the Kingdom's "keen interest in bringing the peace efforts to a successful end in a way that ensures that the Palestinians will regain their legitimate political rights."

"We fully agree with His Majesty's position that we (Jordanians and Palestinians) are a joint delegation and we have a common cause," he said. "Any harm to this cause through Israeli practices in the occupied territories is directed against the peace process and placing obstacles in its path."

The Jordanian stand expressed by King Hussein is designed to urge the U.S. and Russia to exert all efforts to prevent Israel from its repressive measures in the occupied territories and the work towards the immediate return of all expelled in accordance with Resolution 799," he said.

On prospects for the resumption of peace talks on April 20, Mr. Kaddoumi said: "When the Palestinian delegation met with Mr. Christopher in Jerusalem (during his recent Middle East visit), a six-point memo was presented to him in the name of the Palestinian people. It included the Palestinian conditions for the resumption of the peace talks and on which any just peace settlement should be based."

PLO, Hamas discuss future of Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

be more than 40 per cent; they say we would receive the majority of the votes, would like to have elections and see what our true strength on the street is."

Mr. Nazzari had been meeting with Amman-based PLO official Abbas Zaki and Abdul Rahim Mallouh, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) office to discuss "concerted actions vis-a-vis this issue of withdrawal."

Mr. Zaki and Mr. Mallouh were out of the country Friday and were unavailable for comments.

But PLO officials in Tunis voiced amazement at the Hamas statements, saying that it was "much too early to speak of proposals which have not officially been made."

"The PLO has not received any Israeli, Arab or American offer which would indicate that the Israelis were willing to withdraw from Palestinian lands in Gaza or elsewhere," said a senior advisor to Yasser Arafat, Mamdouh Nofal.

"This issue (of withdrawal from Gaza) may be brought up at the next round of talks and maybe the Israelis will make a previously unknown proposal," he said.

"We will consider any Israeli withdrawal a sign that the liberation of our land has begun and we will bear the responsibility of governing any land that has been liberated," Mr. Nofal said.

The United Nations and the Arab countries will also have "their responsibilities to live up to in case of an Israeli withdrawal," he added.

PLO officials were careful not to say that no proposal had been made. They only stressed that no "official" proposal had been made to them.

"There is absolutely no official proposal of the sort," said another PLO official in Tunis, speaking to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.

The official confirmed that "Gaza will probably be the easiest part of Palestine to liberate" and that the PLO would consider moving its people and temporary headquarters to the parts of Palestine that were liberated at the initial stages of the negotiations.

Palestinian analysts in Amman feared that an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza would ignite a power struggle between the PLO and Hamas in the poor and overpopulated strip and that the declaration of a Palestinian state in Gaza would occur.

"If there is a withdrawal from Gaza outside the framework of an overall Palestinian-Israeli

agreement then we will be cantoning Palestinian lands similar to the way the proposal for Bosnian Muslim lands is a form of cantonisation," said a veteran Palestinian analyst in Jordan.

The withdrawal from Gaza, which I suspect will occur, can leave a power vacuum if the PLO does not move in lock, stock and barrel in an organised and efficient manner," said the analyst.

Declaring a Palestinian state, which PLO officials insist will not occur in Gaza but "in Jerusalem," would effectively negate the possibility of declaring a state in the West Bank or East Jerusalem, Palestinian analysts say.

Whether by announcing the discussion of the talks Hamas wants to emphasise its growing role in Palestinian politics or divert attention from other issues is not clear, PLO officials say.

"Instead of concentrating on the expelled or studying the six-point plan of the Americans, they are discussing proposals which are not yet on the table," Mr. Nofal said.

But Hamas appears to be moving forward with its public relations campaign both in Europe and in the Arab World.

After announcing that they had met Chinese and Spanish diplomats last week, Hamas issued an official statement Friday thanking a senior Saudi Arabian clergyman for his support of Palestinian causes.

Addressing the statement to Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, a senior Saudi cleric who has government backing, Hamas thanked the sheikh for his statements of support.

While the supposed statement by Sheikh Ben Baz was not available to the Jordan Times, the Hamas statement claimed that he had urged all "Muslims to support Palestinians by financing them and offering both arms and men to their disposal."

The cleric had apparently called on all Arab governments to take a united stand on the issue of expelled and had pledged his support.

"We will extend our support and our money to the Palestinians," the Hamas statement quoted Sheikh Ben Baz as saying. No mention was apparently made in the statement about the PLO. The cleric is thought to have been giving "mixed" signals to the Palestinians, Palestinian analysts say.

"Saudi Arabia and some Gulf countries had been giving special attention and dues to Hamas even before the Gulf war; now it is a way to tease the PLO," said an analyst. PLO relations with most Gulf countries plummeted after Palestinians openly opposed the U.S.-led alliance against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

FBI traces funds for New York blast

(Continued from page 1)

indictment and possible removal to New York.

A top investigator in the bombing has said he believes the suspects had accomplices who have disappeared and may have fled to the Middle East.

Finding the source of the money would help investigators determine a motive in the Feb. 26 bombing that killed at least five people and injured more than 1,000. The bomb went off in a garage underneath the twin 110-storey towers.

While the federal investigator would not disclose how much money had been transferred into the account, he said there were probably several deposits of under \$10,000. Deposits of that size would avoid federal laws requiring the reporting of cash

transactions of \$10,000 or more. Mr. Salameh, 25, is described as an illegal alien from Jordan who was arrested March 4.

Both are charged with aiding in the bombing. Mr. Salameh is alleged to have rented the van that held the bomb. Mr. Ayyad's alleged role has not been disclosed.

Mr. Ayyad and Mr. Salameh share an account at a Jersey City branch of National Westminster Bank.

Other links between the two men include attending services at the same mosque in Jersey City. And both Mr. Salameh and Mr. Ayyad have been close to Al Sayid Nosair, who was acquitted of murder in the 1990 assassination of Rabbi Meir Kahane but is in Attica state prison on related charges.

Relatives say Ayyad not extremist

(Continued from page 1)

Nidal and his siblings grew up in Kuwait under the care of their mother Fatima, their maternal grandfather, who was a preacher in a mosque in Kuwait, and their maternal uncle, Khalil Abdul Aziz Ayyad.

He passed Tawjihi from the Hawth High School in Kuwait City in 1985 with an average of 75 per cent marks.

Nidal, who held a Jordanian passport, left Kuwait in 1985 for the United States on immigration papers arranged by his father and joined Rutgers University in New York. He graduated in 1991 in chemical engineering. He acquired American citizenship in the same year.

His two sisters are married to Americans of Arab origin and live in Washington, D.C. His mother lives with her sons in Maplewood, New Jersey.

His grandfather and uncle say they used to support the youth throughout his education since his father's assistance was negligible. Nidal also worked in the cafeteria of Rutgers University to support himself, they said.

Sheikh Ayyad visited his grandson in 1990, shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which forced the entire Ayyad family, along with the bulk of the Palestinian community, to leave the emirate.

Khalil Ayyad, who now works for an insurance company in Amman said the parents of Mr. Salameh visited his home last year to meet Nidal's mother who was in Jordan at that time to prepare for her son's marriage.

The Salamehs "knew that Nidal and Mohammad were friends in the U.S. and wanted to inquire about their son from his friend's mother," said his wife, Umm Abed.

Umm Abed or anyone else in the Ayyad family in Jordan did not know anything more about the relationship between Nidal Ayyad and Mohammad Salameh except that they were good friends.

Sheikh Ayyad, who lives in Jabal Akhtar, said that during his visit to the U.S. in 1990, "I heard Nidal talking a lot about his friend Mohammad, but I did not see the boy."

After his graduation from Rutgers, Nidal took up employment with Allied Signals Inc., a New

Jersey firm. One of his brothers, Rezaq, is also working; the other two, Abdul Hamid and Khalil, are still in school.

Nidal visited Jordan for the first time in April 1992 to get engaged to a girl from the Gabounah family, from the Majdal Askalan village in the occupied Gaza Strip, who was chosen by his mother.

He flew back to the U.S. after the engagement and returned on Dec. 11 with American immigration papers for his 18-year-old bride.

His mother Fatima attended the wedding along with his brothers. His father did not attend.

The couple were married on Dec. 19 and left for the U.S. on Dec. 28. According to Umm Abed, who said she talked to Nidal's mother upon hearing the news of Nidal's arrest on Wednesday, the wife is pregnant.

Ayyad family members declined to give any details of the in-laws of Nidal except that they lived somewhere in Amman (Salt) and did not want to talk to the press.

Sheikh Ayyad said his grandson was religious and used to read religious books in his spare time. "He used to pray regularly and fast during Ramadan like any other devout Muslim," Sheikh Ayyad said. "But he is not a fundamentalist or extremist," he added. "I am sure that he was not linked with any political or religious group in Kuwait or elsewhere."

Khalil Ayyad said Nidal told him when he was here for his marriage that "he was committed to the American political system and voted for President Bill Clinton in the last elections with hopes that things would get better for America."

Umm Abed described Nidal as "a straight-forward boy." "I hope my children would grow up to be like him," Umm Abed said, stroking the hair of her 11-year-old son Abdul Aziz sitting in her living room overlooking the sprawling Wihdat refugee camp.

She said she "practically brought up" Nidal and his siblings while in Kuwait.

"He was never involved in any violence even when he was a small boy when it is natural for children to get into fights with each other."

Exiles reject reported PLO plan

(Continued from page 1)

bathe, wash clothes and dry mattresses soaked during several days of heavy rain and hail.

They received food smuggled on mules by villagers.

The expelled have a new prob-

lem — "hungry wolves." Ziad Abdallah, 27, was walking near a river just above the camp Thursday night when he saw five beasts surging towards him. Trembling, he threw himself into the water and drifted with the flow.

Yeltsin to press for referendum

(Continued from page 1)

measures from the resolution, "I shall really be forced to think about additional measures to preserve the balance of powers in the country."

Although he did not spell to the deputies what measures he would take, aides said he would press for the national plebiscite on April 25.

"It's much better to go to polling places than to take to the streets," Mr. Shakhrai told reporters.

In addition, it is presumed elections would be held early for both the president and parliament.

Mr. Khasbulatov, Mr. Yeltsin's main rival for power, is seeking simultaneous elections. Currently, presidential elections are scheduled for 1996 and parliamentary elections for 1995.

U.S. officials said in Washington Thursday that Mr. Yeltsin was weighing the dissolution of congress and emergency rule, but first Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko told reporters not to expect such a "sensation."

Nevertheless, Yeltsin told the deputies he had reached his limit.

"I have done everything possible to reach an accord, proposed a number of versions for compromise, listened to opinions, though in many cases they took foul and sometimes insulting forms," Mr. Yeltsin said as the lawmakers listened uneasily in the Grand Kremlin Palace.

"There is only an extremely small selection of means left to maintain the stability of the situation," he said.

But the deputies remained unmoved by his speech.

Palestinians see American pressure

(Continued from page 1)

Jerusalem Wednesday refused to accept the invitation, and returned it to the consular desk.

But Palestinian officials, unable to predict what developments are expected to take place before April 20 that might affect their decision on whether to participate in the bilateral, insisted that the Palestinian leadership was firm against attending the talks under the current conditions without achieving any of their demands.

In six points presented to Mr. Christopher during his recent Mideast tour, Palestinian leaders demanded a U.S. declaration that Israeli expulsions are illegal and a new American letter of assurances confirming the Madrid terms of reference of the peace negotiations; i.e. that the basis of the talks in both phases (the interim and final) are resolutions 242 and 338 — an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.

While Palestinians said that these points were initially (and verbally) approved by Mr. Christopher in Jerusalem, the Americans retracted their position after Israel's rejection of the demands.

The rest of the points include an Israeli commitment to the following:

— A commitment to end further expulsions of Palestinians.

— An acceleration of implementing Resolution 799, calling on Israel's immediate and unconditional return of the evictees, and agree to a scheduled repatriation of the 400 stranded Palestinian men;

— To agree to return a "sizeable" number of Palestinians expelled from the occupied territories since 1967;

— To stop its violations of human rights against the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Salah Raafat, an Amman-based PLO official, told the Jordan Times that contacts with the U.S. were ongoing and that a Palestinian delegation was expected to visit Washington to discuss the pending issues with State Department officials, but that no date had been set.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, PLO officials said that the head of the organisation's political department, Farouk Kaddoumi, failed to convince Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa to hold a foreign ministers meeting of Arab parties involved in the peace talks during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Seen by Palestinians as a delaying tactic, Syria set the coordination meeting after Ramadan and the feast holidays. But instead of gathering Arab support for their position at that meeting, the PLO might find itself cornered to accept participation

Mr. Raafat also said that the PLO had rejected an American draft letter of assurances on the terms of reference of the negotiations because the U.S. had not included Jerusalem as part of 242. The letter was in response of a Palestinian demand for American reassurances of the terms of reference of the talks.

The official, a senior member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) — Yasser Abed Rabbo's wing — insisted that the PLO would not yield to pressure to send its delegation to the talks if their minimal demands were not met.

"We simply will not go even if the rest of the Arab parties did," Mr. Raafat stressed.

"Everyone knows that there cannot be a solution to the Middle East conflict unless substantive issues are resolved on the Palestinian track."

But Mr. Christopher's statement that he was sure of Palestinian participation in the ninth round of talks indicated that either Palestinian signals were delivered to Washington that the PLO was ready to consider sending its peace delegation, or that the pressure on the Palestinians would be so great they would have to participate, analysts say.

Palestinians have already started to come under pressure since Wednesday's invitations were issued. While all the Arab parties said they would make their position to the April talks known after a coordination meeting in Damascus at the end of this month, Syria and Lebanon have already indicated their willingness to resume the talks with Israel.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, PLO officials said that the head of the organisation's political department, Farouk Kaddoumi, failed to convince Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa to hold a foreign ministers meeting of Arab parties involved in the peace talks during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Seen by Palestinians as a delaying tactic, Syria set the coordination meeting after Ramadan and the feast holidays. But instead of gathering Arab support for their position at that meeting, the PLO might find itself cornered to accept participation

Rabin begins talks in Washington

(Continued from page 1)

difficult to stick with this with the belief that the process will bring results," Mr. Rabin said.

He also noted he had been wrong in predicting, before his election last July, that an agreement with the Palestinians could be reached in six to nine months. He noted no breakthrough has been achieved since the talks began in October 1991.

Responding to American suggestions that the United States should become a "full partner" in the negotiations, Mr. Rabin said it was too early for such a move.

"In my view, no Arab-Israeli agreement can be reached without American involvement," Mr. Rabin said, noting the U.S.-engineered Camp David accords led to the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

But he said active American involvement came only after the two sides narrowed their differences through direct talks.

"It will be very bad if the Americans won't learn the lesson that first the two sides need to move closer to one another and only then is there room for greater American involvement," Mr. Rabin added.

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Russian Congress battles for control of economy

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin has stolen the headlines in a war of words in Moscow this week, but a second battle is also under way — the fight for economic reforms and control of a free-spending central bank.

Russia's economic reformers have used an extraordinary session of the Congress of People's Deputies as a forum to argue for increased powers over financial and monetary policy.

"The situation regarding the central bank is very difficult," Deputy Prime Minister Boris Fyodorov told a news conference Thursday.

"In no other country does a government have to struggle to get tight monetary policy from the central bank," he pointed out.

The reformers, charged with transforming Russia's socialist system to a Western-style market economy, say the central bank is fuelling inflation by pumping out money and according to high spending demands from a conservative parliament.

But central bank chairman Viktor Gerashchenko questions the link between money supply and inflation. He told Congress the Russian money supply rose 10.3 times in 1992, a rise in line with the rising incomes of the population.

Mr. Gerashchenko said many credits had been issued at the request of the government. He blamed monopolist producers for charging excessive prices and driving inflation up.

How monetary policy should be controlled was a side issue in the debate, with Mr. Yeltsin initially calling for the central bank to be put under government control.

The central bank now reports to parliament and Mr. Fyodorov complained that Mr. Gerashchenko was too willing to accede to parliamentary demands which would increase spending sharply.

"Deputies' proposals would increase the Russian budget by 100 per cent, money which can only be found from the air," Mr. Fyodorov said. "Of course kind uncle Gerashchenko will be only too ready to print it."

But Mr. Gerashchenko said there was no need for the government to bring the central bank under its control.

"The subordination of the central bank to the council of ministers will not achieve anything since the bank's possibility (sic) in monetary policies are very limited," he said.

Mr. Fyodorov, who has described control of inflation as the

Volvo reports record 1992 loss

STOCKHOLM (R) — Swedish vehicle maker A.B. Volvo has announced a record loss for 1992, reflecting a continued weak market facing tough price competition.

The company also lowered its dividend for the first time.

Volvo had pre-tax loss 3.31 billion crowns (\$430 million) compared with a 1.11 billion crown profit (\$144 million) in 1991.

"This is the lowest pre-tax result we have ever published," a Volvo official told Reuters.

Volvo also halved its dividend for 1992 to 7.75 crowns per share from 15.5 crowns in 1991. Volvo, started in the 1930s, had never before lowered its dividend.

"The market for most of Volvo's products continued to be weak," the company said in a statement. "Utilisation of capacity in the automotive industry was low, resulting in sharp price competition."

"Demand for both cars and trucks in the United States in-

Japanese economy grows at slowest pace in 18 years

TOKYO (R) — Japan's economy grew at its slowest pace in nearly two decades in 1992 in what is becoming a painfully unique chapter in the nation's post-war history.

The Economic Planning Agency (EPA) announced Friday that gross national product (GNP) rose a real 1.5 per cent in calendar 1992, the slowest this once-robust economy has grown since 1974.

GNP measures the nation's total output of goods and services. Economists said GNP, which grew at an impressive 4.1 per cent a year earlier, appears to be caught in a prolonged period of unimpressive growth that will be much closer to its Western counterparts than the "economic miracle" that the world has come to expect from Tokyo.

"This is a new sort of downturn over Japan. It is like stepping into a haunted house. We don't know where the ghosts are coming from," said Keiichi Honda, president of BOT International.

The EPA, which also reported quarterly data for the October/December 1992 period, said gross domestic product (GDP), the sum of the nation's goods and services minus income from abroad, declined for an unprecedented third straight quarter.

EPA Vice-Minister Shunji Fukunaka said that in light of Friday's figures, Japan will be hard pressed to meet an already modest goal of 1.6 per cent growth for fiscal 1993/94 ending March 31.

GNP narrowly averted a second straight decline, rising a real 0.1 per cent in the October/December quarter from the previous quarter, or an annualised 0.5 per cent.

Economists said whatever little growth Japan is managing is due in large part to government spending and that the data will further fuel political pressure for the government to pour more money into the economy.

Whereas past downturns have been caused by external price fluctuations such as higher oil prices and the strong yen, the nation's current problems are rooted in a combination of structural and cyclical difficulties.

Prices of both stocks and real estate collapsed completely after the nation's "bubble economy" of the late 1980s was burst by sharply higher interest rates.

Declines in real estate prices of up to 50 per cent in big cities has brought the nation's financial community to its knees and crippled credit expansion.

As if that were not bad enough, Japan has been hit by a cyclical downturn in corporate profits and public consumption.

"Japan has a glut in private capital that could take years to be reduced," said Mr. Honda at BOT.

Indeed, public confidence in Japan's policy-makers has been badly shaken by their handling of the economy and there is little sign that Japanese consumers will return to the free-spending ways that pushed the economy in the late 1980s.

London Stock Exchange drops computer project

LONDON (R) — The head of the London Stock Exchange resigned Thursday in an upheaval in which the securities market dumped its ambitious TAURUS electronic share-settlement project.

The exchange said it was scrapping the project after years of repeated delays and considerable debate. The 220 exchange staff working on TAURUS were sacked and contracts with another 130 cancelled.

Chief executive Peter Rawlins resigned, taking the blame for the fiasco.

TAURUS (Transfer and Automated Registration of Uncertified Stock) was meant to update London's outmoded, paper-based share settlement system.

But its cost spiralled from an initial estimated £45 million (\$65 million) to £70 million (\$100 million). Many financial sources estimated it would have cost at least £150 million (\$215 million) to complete TAURUS.

The decision to scrap the project, although widely predicted in the media, was a major embarrassment to the stock exchange and meant an immediate substitute would be needed.

"London's credibility as an international securities market is at stake and an alternative system is needed urgently," the British Bankers' Association said in a statement.

"Britain's clearing banks have spent £30 to £40 million (\$43 to \$57 million) on (the system)," it added.

The governor of the Bank of England set up a task force to report by June on an alternative.

"Nothing that has happened changes the strategic objective of providing the U.K. with efficient, low risk and internationally competitive securities settlement," said Pen Kent, who heads the central bank's task force on TAURUS.

The task force would consider all possibilities except one — TAURUS was unlikely to be revived, a Bank of England source said. It was also possible that the stock exchange would not finance or operate the new system.

Originally, TAURUS was supposed to have started in May 1992, but it was delayed several times and was still in the testing stage.

Stock exchange officials had said it could not come into full effect until 1994 at the earliest.

Stockbrokers and others in London's financial district had said they feared TAURUS would cost them more as development costs escalated.

"I think the reaction within the equity market will be one of relief," one market analyst said. "There were a lot of things wrong with it."

Difficulties which arose over how share-rights issues, stock conversions and open offers would be handled made the entire system unworkable, some said.

Jordanians signal eagerness to invest

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Investment fever in Jordan has proved much higher than most expectations as the latest share flotation by Jordan Kuwait Bank has been oversubscribed 11 times.

Mr. Jamjoom said. He explained that prior to the 1.5 million share flotation the bank's shareholders were around 17,500 but the number rose to 113,133 at the end of the flotation on Feb. 26, 1993.

Mr. Jamjoom pointed out that each new shareholder might at best receive only five shares with the rest of shares to be spread according to a certain percentage guideline.

The general manager of the bank was not sure whether the bank's board would opt to raise the capital to JD 10 million due to the heavy subscription volume and to the general worldwide trend to increase the capital in accordance with

Bank of International Settlements (BIS) guidelines, but he hinted such a possibility was valid.

Many Jordanian banks have decided or are still considering raising their capital. Among these banks are the Jordan Islamic Bank, the Jordan Arab Investment Bank and the Bank of Jordan.

Mr. Jamjoom declined to be specific on the performance of Jordan Kuwait Bank last year because the Central Bank of Jordan was tightening its supervision on banks by requesting all yearly financial results be approved by it first.

Mr. Jamjoom added, however, that it can be generally said that the bank improved its profit by 25 per cent over the 1991 figure.

Italy industrialists worry about economy

ROME (R) — Italian industrialists are increasingly worried about whether the country's economy can withstand the continuing attrition of its top executives and the political fallout from an ever-widening corruption scandal.

If the full chamber endorses its decision, a decree to unblock hundreds of public works contracts frozen by the scandal will have to become an ordinary bill which could take months to pass through parliament.

Construction accounts for some 10 per cent of the country's total output.

Bribes alleged to have been paid by businessmen to politicians for public works contracts lie at the heart of the year-long scandal which has landed dozens of the country's leaders in jail.

Analysts said Thursday Italy's widening corruption probe risks delaying economic recovery and adding to the country's huge debt problems.

Analysts fear the political damage inflicted by the Milan-based probe into the illegal financing of political parties may have reduced the government's role to that of caretaker.

Finance police arrested Raffaele Santoro, president of ENI's oil producing company AGIP SPA, the state-owned group's most important subsidiary, along with the heads of the company's gas firm and an engineering unit.

Judicial sources said Pio Pignatelli, president of gas company SNAM and Gianni Dell'orto, chief of engineering firm SAIPEM, were being charged with violating laws on the financing of political parties.

Later Thursday, police arrested Roberto Ruberti, the head of Italy's export credit guarantee body, SACE, and charged him with aggravated corruption.

Italian news agencies reported Mr. Ruberti was arrested in an investigation of alleged kickbacks paid to secure contracts financed by Italian aid for Third world countries.

Also Thursday, Prime Minister Giuliano Amato suffered another parliamentary setback to his plans to rescue the economy from

the impact of the corruption scandal.

The chamber of deputies (lower house) constitutional affairs committee declared by 20 votes to 14 he has no right to try to ram through a decree to aid the vital construction industry's recovery.

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Clinton outlines \$20 billion for defence conversion

LINTHICUM, Maryland (R) — President Bill Clinton outlined Thursday a \$20 billion, four-year programme to help workers and communities losing jobs because of post-cold war defence cuts and base closings.

Mr. Clinton acted before a defence department announcement of sweeping new military base-closings, which is expected to shut down as many as 30 big domestic bases and reduce the size of up to 150 others.

The president also announced creation of another toll-free hotline to let companies propose ideas for converting from military to civilian output.

Mr. Clinton's so-called defence conversion initiative, which borrowed other elements from former president George Bush, was unveiled at a Westinghouse Electric Corp facility that has succeeded in adapting military technology to civilian use.

During a tour of the facility, Mr. Clinton saw such examples of successful adaptation as an electric car, a weather radar, and a surveillance plane recently used to assist law officers surrounding the Waco, Texas, cult base of David Koresh.

The Baltimore-area plant had been a major recipient of military contracts for F-16 fighters and submarine missile launchers.

Mr. Clinton recalled an observation of president Dwight Eisenhower that "the resourceful American makers of ploughshares could with time and as required make swords as well."

"Our challenge is to how to reverse the process. I know today that the world's finest makers of swords can and will be the world's finest makers of ploughshares," Mr. Clinton said.

His conversion programme includes \$1.4 billion already approved by Congress and \$300 million more Mr. Clinton has proposed spending for fiscal year 1993.

The administration plans to expand the programme to \$5.2 billion by 1997 for a total of \$20 billion over its four-year life.

The money will be spent to help train displaced defence workers and help communities prepare for base closings.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
BANKING AND SECURITIES - JERUSALEM				
TELEPHONE: 66171 / 66170				
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (16/03/1993) - 16/03/1993				
MODEL REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADE VOLUME	PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
JORDAN BANK	136,345	129.000	128.000	127.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	167,000	4.750	4.800	4.750
CATCO JORDAN BANK	151,914	26.625	26.625	26.625
BANK OF JORDAN	33,000	22.000	22.000	22.000
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	73,765	3.000	3.000	3.000
THE BOKHARA BANK	147,225	3.750	3.750	3.750
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	235,468	2.000	2.000	2.000
JORDAN JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	94,671	5.500	5.500	5.500
JORDAN TRADING BANK	44,261	4.750	4.750	4.750
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	42,235	3.000	3.000	3.000
BRIDGES BANK	49,213	2.100	2.100	2.100
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	32,291	3.750	3.750	3.750
JORDAN TRADING INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	134,000	1.100	1.100	1.100
JORDAN TRADING INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	4,420	3.000	3.000	3.000
ANAS BUILDING CORPORATION/JORDAN	730	3.000	3.000	3.000
JORDAN INSURANCE	6,883	2.400	2.400	2.400
ANAS LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	48,000	5.800	5.800	5.800
JORDAN TRADING INSURANCE	2,393	3.100	3.100	3.100
ANAS TRADING INSURANCE	120,180	1.700	1.700	1.700
ANAS TRADING INSURANCE	1,473	1.000	1.000	1.000
ANAS TRADING INSURANCE	11,264	3.600	3.600	3.600
ANAS TRADING INSURANCE	99,822	4.000	4.000	4.000
ANAS TRADING INSURANCE	17,124	1.800	1.800	1.800
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ANAS TRADING INSURANCE	17,124	1.800	1.800	1.800
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Around 200 die in Bombay blasts

BOMBAY (AP) — A series of car bombs exploded across Bombay Friday, killing almost 200 people and injuring 800. Two of the blasts set fire to skyscrapers housing India's largest stock exchange and the headquarters of its international airline.

Scattered Hindu-Muslim violence erupted in several areas of the city after the explosions. Witnesses saw about 25 Hindus set two cars afire in a Muslim neighbourhood. In another area, Muslims torched a building and threw stones indiscriminately.

Chief Minister Sharad Pawar, the state's top official who reported the casualty figures, told reporters that the bombing wave appeared to be a deliberate effort to "spread panic." But he did not speculate who might be responsible.

At least 12 bombs went off within 75 minutes across various districts of India's financial capital, including seven in the commercial district, S.B. Chavan, the federal home minister said. Two federal hotels were also damaged.

"There is panic in the whole of Bombay," said Harpreet Kaur, a stock broker in a building in the stock exchange area.

"Nobody has had time to think about who is responsible. People have been busy trying to find out what happened and find the victims," she said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Pawar warned Bombay's 12 million citizens to be on alert for more bombs, to look their cars and check the basements of tall buildings.

"There has to be perfect planning" for this kind of action, Mr. Pawar said. He called it an attempt to disrupt the stability that was returning to Bombay after the January riots.

About 600 people were killed in the Bombay riots, which were an extension of the nationwide violence in December that began after Hindu extremists tore down a Muslim shrine on disputed holy ground in Ayodhya. In the nationwide riots 1,940 were killed.

In New Delhi, Deputy Home Minister Rajesh Pilot told lawmakers that all the explosions were from car bombs. He said the government issued a nationwide alert.

At least 20 burned and mutilated bodies were removed from the 23 storey Air India Airline building, most of them from the Bank of Oman on the street level which was gutted.

The 28 storey stockexchange building caught fire from the explosion at 1:30 p.m. (0000 GMT). Stock brokers and investors bolted from the building in panic. Some people were trampled to death in a stampede of people fleeing to the streets, Press Trust of India said. The blast came in the middle of trading when the second-floor exchange was most crowded.

About 3,000 stock brokers, traders and employees work on the stock exchange floor, and thousands more on the other floors.

United News of India, which had a reporter on the fourth floor, said the blast occurred in a basement parking garage, blew up more than 30 cars, and shattered windows up to the third floor.

Some people were stranded on upper floors when security officials closed smoky staircases. Press Trust of India reported. Other people broke windows on lower floors and tried to jump out.

Ms. Kaur said many of the injured were street vendors and unregistered stock traders who conduct their business outside the building. "There were so many dead bodies outside in the street," she said. Smoke billowed from the lower floors, as people poured out of the entrance.

Ms. Kaur said she heard another explosion about 90 minutes after the stock exchange one. She was in her car about an hour away from the downtown area when she heard the second blast.

The explosion outside the headquarters of Air India flung bodies up to 20 feet away, Press Trust reported. Scores of people were trapped in its underground parking lot.

One bomb rattled the Victoria Terminus, the 19th century railway station where hundreds of thousands of commuters and travellers pass through daily.

Another went off at Shivaji Park near the headquarters of the radical Hindu group Shiv Sena, which was blamed for inciting some of the worst anti-Muslim violence in January.

A third went off at the Centaur Hotel near the city's airport, and a fourth at Seacork Hotel in Bandra, 22 kilometres from the city centre.

In a separate development, India replaced the hardline governor of Jammu and Kashmir state Thursday to ease the way toward talks on ending a bloody three-year Muslim insurrection.

Under the governorship of Girish Chander Saxena, who served in the post since May 1990, India deployed massive forces in the Kashmir Valley and its capital, Srinagar, to crush the insurrection. Nearly 5,000 people have died in the fighting since it broke out in December 1989.

Mr. Saxena submitted his resignation to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao Wednesday.

Gen. K.V. Krishna Rao, the newly appointed governor, will be returning to the office he held four years ago.

Kashmir has been governed by a federally appointed governor since January 1990, when the elected government headed by Farooq Abdullah resigned.

Mr. Abdullah, considered close to Krishna Rao, said in an interview he expected talks to begin with militant organisations on granting Kashmir a greater degree of autonomy than anywhere else in India.

Muslim militants are fighting to split Jammu and Kashmir state from India either to merge it with Pakistan or to become an independent country.

Kashmir is the only Muslim majority state in India. Nation-wide, India is 82 per cent Hindu and 12 per cent Muslim.

The switch at the top of the state administration may not satisfy secessionist Muslims.

"We are not bothered who is governor. We are struggling for freedom and only freedom from India is our goal," said John Mohammad, a businessman from Srinagar.

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"They arrived by boat and carried out the attack with military precision."

A U.N. spokesman said there were 60 government soldiers and policemen in the village at the time of the attack but they apparently offered no resistance and fled.

"They are reported to have escaped and none of them suffered any casualties," spokesman Eric Falt told reporters.

A floating police station is moored 500 yards from the site of the massacre.

Many of the bodies recovered had been shot in the head and shoulders, indicating they had been killed while trying to swim for safety, a U.N. source said.

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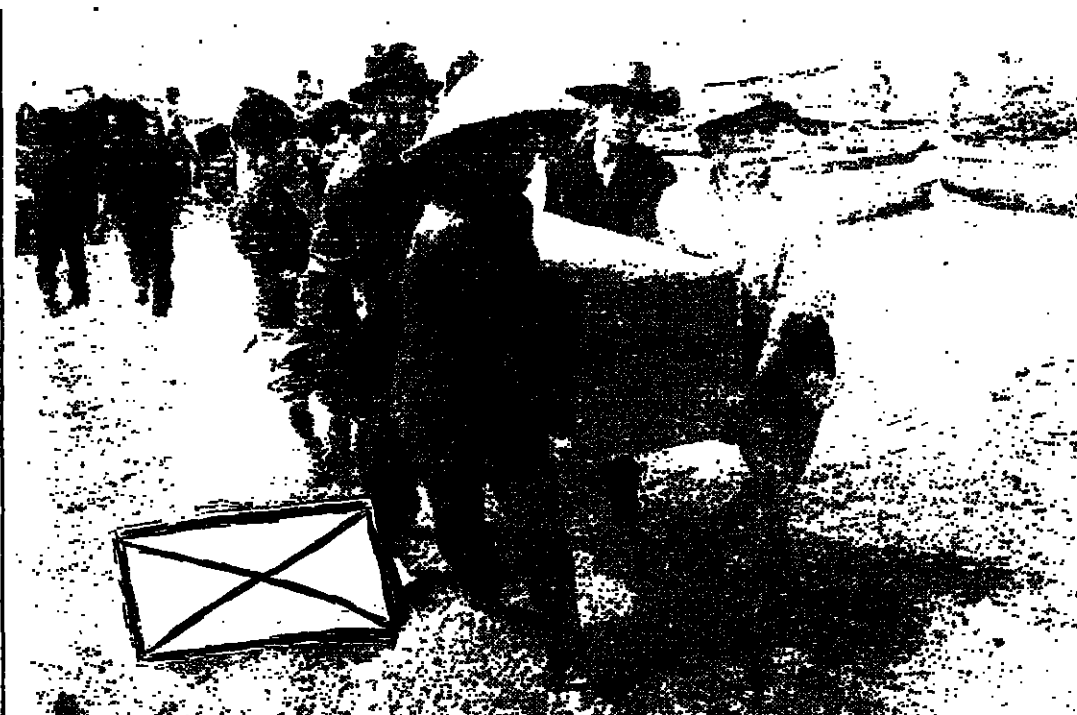
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Ethnic Vietnamese fishermen offload coffins carrying the remains of the 34 ethnic Vietnamese massacred by the Khmer Rouge (AFP photo)

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SEOUL (R) — Communist North Korea, suspected of building an atomic arsenal said Friday, was pulling out of a world accord on nuclear arms limitation despite the threat of U.N. sanctions against its crippled economy.

Pyeongongyang said it would scrap its membership of the 1970 nuclear arms non-proliferation treaty (NPT), which limits the spread of military nuclear technology, rather than allow international inspectors into its sites.

"The withdrawal from the NPT is a well-justified self-defensive measure against the nuclear war manoeuvres of the United States," North Korea said in a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

South Korea, its relations with the North already at a frosty low, said Pyongongyang's withdrawal was an unexpected blow to detente moves and would further divorce the isolated state from the world community.

"It is a bombshell, a slap in the face for the world's efforts to discover the truth about the North's nuclear programme," a senior government official said.

Japanese leaders urged the north to reconsider.

"It is really disarming," said Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa. Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe said it was a challenge to the international system of controlling nuclear proliferation.

Radio Japan said its Korean broadcasts were jammed Friday by Pyongongyang for the first time, along with those of the South Korean station KBS.

"They don't want their people to know they have left the treaty," said a Radio Japan official.

South Korea said the North was highly likely to face United Nations Security Council economic sanctions, a penalty the impoverished state can ill afford following the collapse of communism and the loss of its principal backers.

China remains Pyongongyang's major ally but, mindful of the North's increasing isolation and its own bid to foster better international relations, Peking has pressed the North to settle peacefully its nuclear inspection dispute.

China's use of a veto if the Security Council were to call a vote on North Korean sanctions was therefore by no means a certainty, analysts said.

The U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), last month gave Pyongongyang until March 25 to admit its inspectors to two suspected nuclear weapons plants or face unspecified further action.

It is the first time the IAEA has ever demanded a "special challenge inspection" of a member nation's facilities.

North Korea, which denies any intention of developing nuclear weapons, says the two sites are non-nuclear military installations and are outside the ambit of IAEA inspectors.

Pyeongongyang's Friday statement, monitored in Tokyo, said the IAEA was being manipulated by the United States, which withdrew its nuclear arms from the peninsula last year.

North Korea's belligerent stance against most of the world, and in particular against South Korea and the United States, has intensified in recent days.

On Tuesday Pyongongyang went on to what military chief Kim Jong-il called a "semi-war" footing to coincide with the start of U.S.-South Korean military exercises south of the demilitarised zone, the cold war frontier which bisects the Korean peninsula.

While Seoul and Washington say the annual Team Spirit manoeuvres are purely defensive, Pyongongyang calls them a pretext for a nuclear attack on the North.

IAEA sources said Friday North Korea's withdrawal from the pact is a grave step and the international community will have to consider the implications.

It was unprecedented for any signatory of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to scrap its membership, sources at the IAEA said.

"It is a grave step for North Korea to take... the international community will have to look at the implications of what has been announced," an IAEA source told Reuters.

With the Chinese side without preconditions," he said.

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There would be no distinction made between those members of the team from London and those from Hong Kong, he said.

China has demanded that London and Peking alone decide on the colony's political future.

"Unfortunately the outstanding differences have not been resolved," Mr. Patten told the Legislative Council, adding that the reform legislation would be published and a decision on when to present it to the council for debate would be made later.

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PARIS (R) — A French study to be a rougher, less polished version of the television accident that blew his cover with a live interview on a crackly telephone from what he said was Gaullier's yacht off the coast of France, the former TFI's Patrick Poivre d'Arvor said.

He said he had been on the yacht when he was interviewed by a French television station. He said he had been on the yacht when he was interviewed by a French television station.

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